



Community Structural Funds



Guide to the Community Initiatives

1994-99

First edition

European Commission

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**Community
Initiatives**

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Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication

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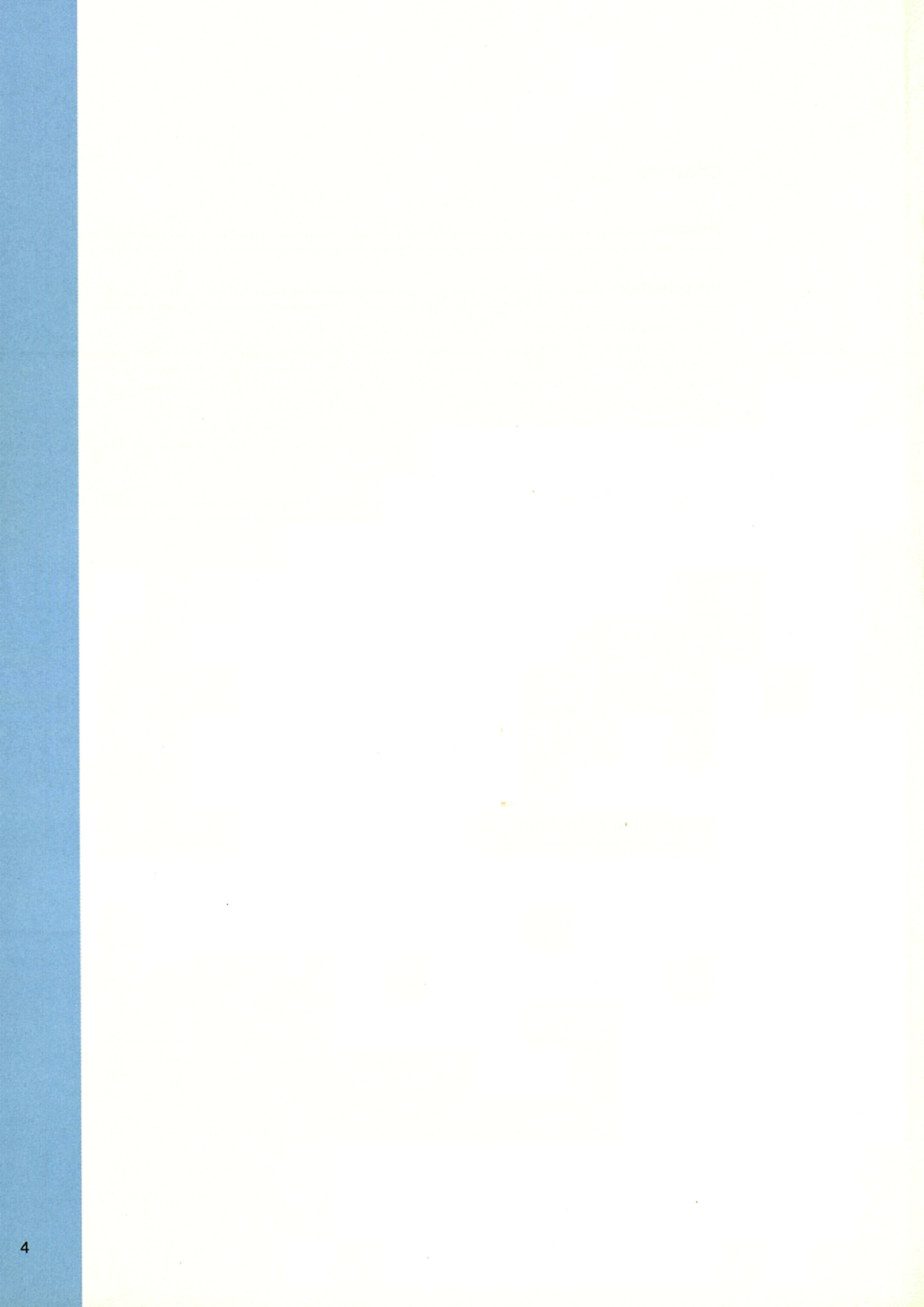
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PREFACE

The Commission of the European Communities recently adopted guidelines on the Community Initiatives financed by the Structural Funds⁽¹⁾ for the period 1994-99.

This is a practical guide to enable all potential beneficiaries to understand better how the Initiatives operate. It includes:

- an introduction explaining what the Community Initiatives are;
- thirteen sections setting out the background to and purpose of each Initiative, describing the measures and, where appropriate, the areas eligible and the funds available and explaining the method of implementation;
- the full text of the Commission's guidelines concerning these Initiatives.

(1) The Community's Structural Funds are the ERDF (European Regional Development Fund), whose aim is to reduce differences in levels of development between regions in the Community; the ESF (European Social Fund), which is responsible for improving employment prospects in the Community, and the EAGGF Guidance Section (European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund, which part-finances national aid schemes for agriculture and helps develop and diversify rural areas of the Community. There is also the FIFG (Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance), which assists in the restructuring of the fisheries sector.

INTRODUCTION

The Community Initiatives

The Community Initiatives are the special financial instruments of structural policy which the Commission proposes to the Member States on its own initiative, to support measures which will help solve problems having a particular impact at European level.

The Community Initiatives have three features which give them added value as compared with the other measures financed by the Structural Funds:

- support for the development of trans-national, cross-border and inter-regional cooperation,
- a "bottom-up" method of implementation,
- and the high profile on the spot which they give to Community measures.

The Commission's Green Paper

In June 1993 the Commission presented its thinking on the future of the Community Initiatives in a Green Paper and proposed regrouping them around five major priorities:

- cross-border, trans-national and inter-regional cooperation and networks;
- rural development;
- the most remote regions;
- employment and the development of human resources;
- the management of industrial change.

This document was discussed at the informal Council of ministers responsible for regional policy and planning which met at Liège in November 1993 and was sent to the European Parliament for its opinion. The Economic and Social Committee, the Consultative Council of Regional and Local Authorities and the economic and social partners were also consulted.

Seven subjects and 13 Initiatives

Following its consultations on the Green Paper, the Commission decided to add to the five original subjects, the development of crisis-hit urban areas and the restructuring of the fishing industry. This extension reflected the concerns of the various parties consulted, and in particular the European Parliament.

On 16 February 1994 the Commission presented its overall approach to the Community Initiatives for the period 1994-99.

There were 13 Initiatives, some of which were entirely new (Employment-Youthstart, Adapt, Textiles and clothing in Portugal, Urban and Pesca) while the others extended, expanded or embraced measures which had already begun.

FEBRUARY 1994 PROPOSAL ECU billion (at 1994 prices)	TOTAL	OBJ. 1
INTERREG/REGEN	2.9	2.3
LEADER	1.4	0.9
REGIS	0.6	0.6
EMPLOYMENT (NOW, HORIZON, YOUTHSTART)	1.4	0.8
INDUSTRIAL CHANGE		
ADAPT	1.4	0.4
RECHAR	0.4	0.1
RESIDER	0.5	0.1
KONVER	0.5	0.2
RETEX	0.5	0.4
TEXTILES AND CLOTHING IN PORTUGAL	0.4	0.4
SMEs	1.0	0.8
URBAN	0.6	0.4
PESCA	0.25	0.1
RESERVE	1.60	0.8
TOTAL	13.45	8.3

Favourable opinions and final adoption

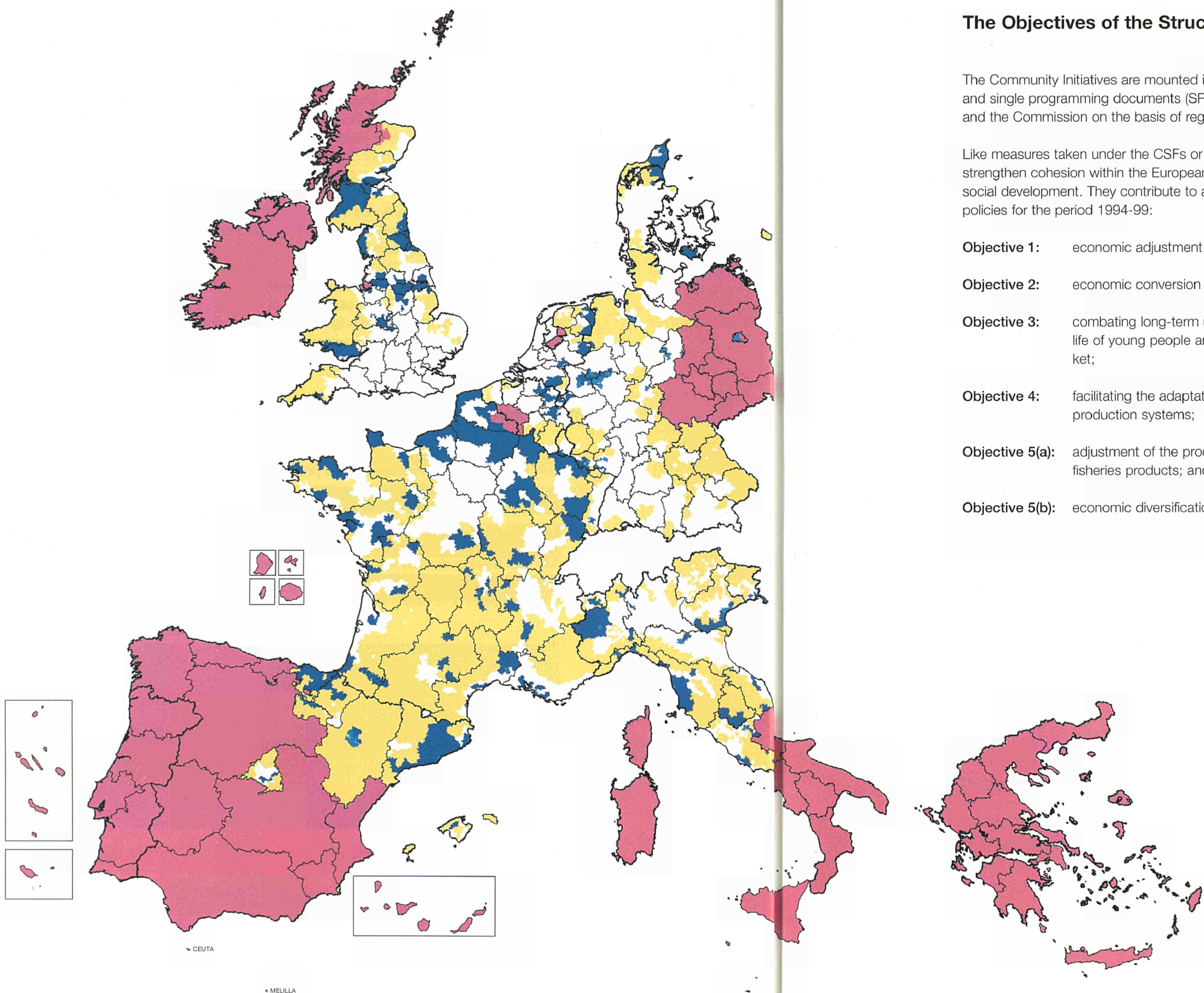
The Commission adopted the proposed guidelines for the 13 Initiatives between 16 March and 6 April 1994. All the Initiatives were enthusiastically received by the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the Economic and Social Committee and the new Management Committee for Community Initiatives, which gave a favourable opinion by a very large majority. On 15 June 1994, following a number of amendments made as a result of its consultations, the Commission adopted the final version of the guidelines.

The regulations on the Structural Funds as amended in July 1993 stated that 9% of the commitment appropriations for those Funds could be used to finance Community Initiatives. In accordance with those regulations and the Commission's financial decisions of 21 October and 21 December 1993, a total of ECU 13.45 billion was allocated to the Community Initiatives as a whole. A total of ECU 11.85 billion has been allocated to the 13 Initiatives approved so far. This leaves a reserve of ECU 1.6 billion (about 12% of the amount available) which will be allocated over the period 1994-99 in the light of experience gained from implementation, new developments and the financial balance among the Member States.

Implementation of the Community Initiatives

On 1 July the Commission's guidelines were published in the Official Journal of the European Communities (No. C 180/1.7.1994). From that date the Member States have four months (until 1 November 1994) to submit their proposals for programmes to the Commission, which will examine them jointly with the Member States before adopting them.

Each Member State designates the authorities responsible for implementing each Initiative and project promoters should contact those authorities for information on progress in programmes which concern them or to have their own measures included.



The Objectives of the Structural Funds

The Community Initiatives are mounted in addition to the Community support frameworks (CSFs) and single programming documents (SPDs) which are negotiated between the Member States and the Commission on the basis of regional or national development plans.

Like measures taken under the CSFs or the SPDs, the aim of the Community Initiatives is to strengthen cohesion within the European Union by encouraging more balanced economic and social development. They contribute to achievement of the five priority Objectives of the structural policies for the period 1994-99:

- Objective 1:** economic adjustment of regions whose development is lagging behind;
- Objective 2:** economic conversion of declining industrial areas;
- Objective 3:** combating long-term unemployment and facilitating the integration into working life of young people and of persons exposed to exclusion from the labour market;
- Objective 4:** facilitating the adaptation of workers to industrial changes and to changes in production systems;
- Objective 5(a):** adjustment of the processing and marketing structures for agricultural and fisheries products; and
- Objective 5(b):** economic diversification of rural areas.

The lists of regions eligible for the Structural Funds are published in the Official Journal of the European Communities. This map has no legal status.

Useful addresses

The addresses of the authorities responsible may be obtained from each Member State or from the Commission:

Directorate-General for Regional Policies

(DG XVI.A - Fax No. +32.2.296 25 68)

for the Initiatives:

- Interreg II;
- Regis II;
- Rechar II;
- Resider II;
- Konver;
- Retex;
- Textiles and clothing in Portugal;
- SMEs;
- Urban.

Directorate-General for Agriculture

(DG VI.F.1.2 - Fax No. +32.2.295 75 47)

for the Initiative Leader II.

Directorate-General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs

(DG V.B.4 - Fax No. +32.2.296 97 70)

for the Initiatives:

- Employment and the development of human resources;
- Adapt.

Directorate-General for Fisheries

(DG XIV.D.1.2 - Fax No. +32.2.296 30 33)

for the Initiative Pesca.

Address for all the Directorates-General:

European Commission
Rue de la Loi, 200
B-1049 Brussels

DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS

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Background

The Interreg Community Initiative, which was adopted in 1990, was intended to prepare border areas for a Community without internal frontiers. The aim of the Regen Initiative launched in the same year was to help fill in some of the missing links in the trans-European networks for transport and energy distribution in the Objective 1 regions.

Purpose

Interreg II has two distinct strands because it combines the functions of Interreg I and Regen. One aim is to develop cross-border cooperation and help areas on the Union's internal and external frontiers to overcome the specific problems arising from their comparatively isolated position vis-à-vis other national economies and the Union as a whole. The second aim is to fill gaps in energy networks and provide interconnections with wider European networks.

A. Cross-border cooperation

Areas eligible

- Areas eligible for Interreg II (see detailed list on p. 42 of the Annex) are:
 - all NUTS III areas in the Community situated on internal and external land borders;
 - certain NUTS III areas on sea borders.
- In certain cases and in the context of cross-border cooperation programmes, Community assistance may also be granted for measures undertaken in NUTS III areas adjacent to those listed:
 - provided they involve a high level of cross-border cooperation; and
 - they do not as a general rule concern more than 20% of total expenditure under the programmes concerned.

Eligible measures (Summary)

- Studies related to development plans treating border areas as an integrated geographical unit.
- Development of and support for small and medium-sized firms, principally through the establishment of cross-border networks of commercial contacts between such firms.
- General tourism and farm-based tourism.

- Local water, gas and electricity supplies, local telecommunications and the development of renewable energy resources.
- Pollution prevention and control, rational use of energy and waste disposal.
- Rural development.
- Improvement of agricultural productivity and support for cross-border trade.
- Establishment or development of trade organizations, professional associations and cross-border planning groups.
- Improving communications infrastructure (transport, media, etc.) in areas where these are seriously deficient.
- Cooperation in the fields of education and culture, including cooperation at higher education level, between research centres and universities.
- Support for training and employment measures, particularly for the unemployed, women and those affected by changes arising from the establishment of the single market.
- Cooperation on health.
- Measures in the fields of energy, telecommunications and transport designed to complement the development of the trans-European networks.
- Special measures to relieve the problems arising from the existence of different languages, administrative procedures and legal systems.
- Preparations for cross-border planning measures.
- Prevention of illicit trade across external frontiers.

In appraising the programmes submitted by the Member States, the Commission will pay particular attention to:

- the existence of a coherent strategy for the border areas concerned with an appropriate combination of structural measures and measures for human resources;
- in the case of internal borders, the likely impact of the measures proposed on development on both sides of the border;
- in the case of external frontiers, the contribution that the proposed measures will make to promoting trans-national cooperation in as many areas as possible;
- the complementary nature of financial assistance from the Community and of national and regional contributions;
- the likely effectiveness of the provisions for implementation, monitoring and assessment and the degree of involvement of regional and local authorities in implementing these programmes (in the case of internal borders, joint provisions should be envisaged).

Planned allocation

ECU 2 400 million to the "cross-border cooperation" strand, of which ECU 1 800 million will be allocated to the Objective 1 regions.

Only a limited amount will be available for allocation to areas not eligible under Objectives 1, 2 and 5(b).

Loans may be granted by the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).

Countries which are not members of the Union may not receive grants from the Structural Funds, but cross-border activities in areas of countries in central and eastern Europe adjacent to the Union's external frontiers may be financed under the Phare programme (budget heading B7-612).

Implementation

The Member States must have submitted proposals for programmes or global grants or amendments to programmes under the "cross-border cooperation" strand by 2 November 1994.

Each internal border in the Union will be covered by a single programme for the two or more Member States concerned. Similarly, each frontier of a Member State which forms part of the Community's external frontier will be covered by a single programme including, where necessary and possible, the measures taken on each side of the frontier. Neighbouring countries will have to present applications for financial assistance under other Community programmes, such as Phare, in accordance with the procedures laid down.

likely to be completed between 1994 and 1999 and on a sound balance between grants and loans.

Planned allocation

ECU 500 million to the "completion of networks" strand.

Loans may be granted by the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).

Implementation

The Member States must have submitted proposals for programmes by 2 November 1994. The Member States are to submit proposals as soon as possible for projects on which satisfactory feasibility studies have already been carried out. In other cases, the Member States are to submit proposals if there are feasibility studies justifying their implementation.

B. Completion of energy networks

Eligible measures

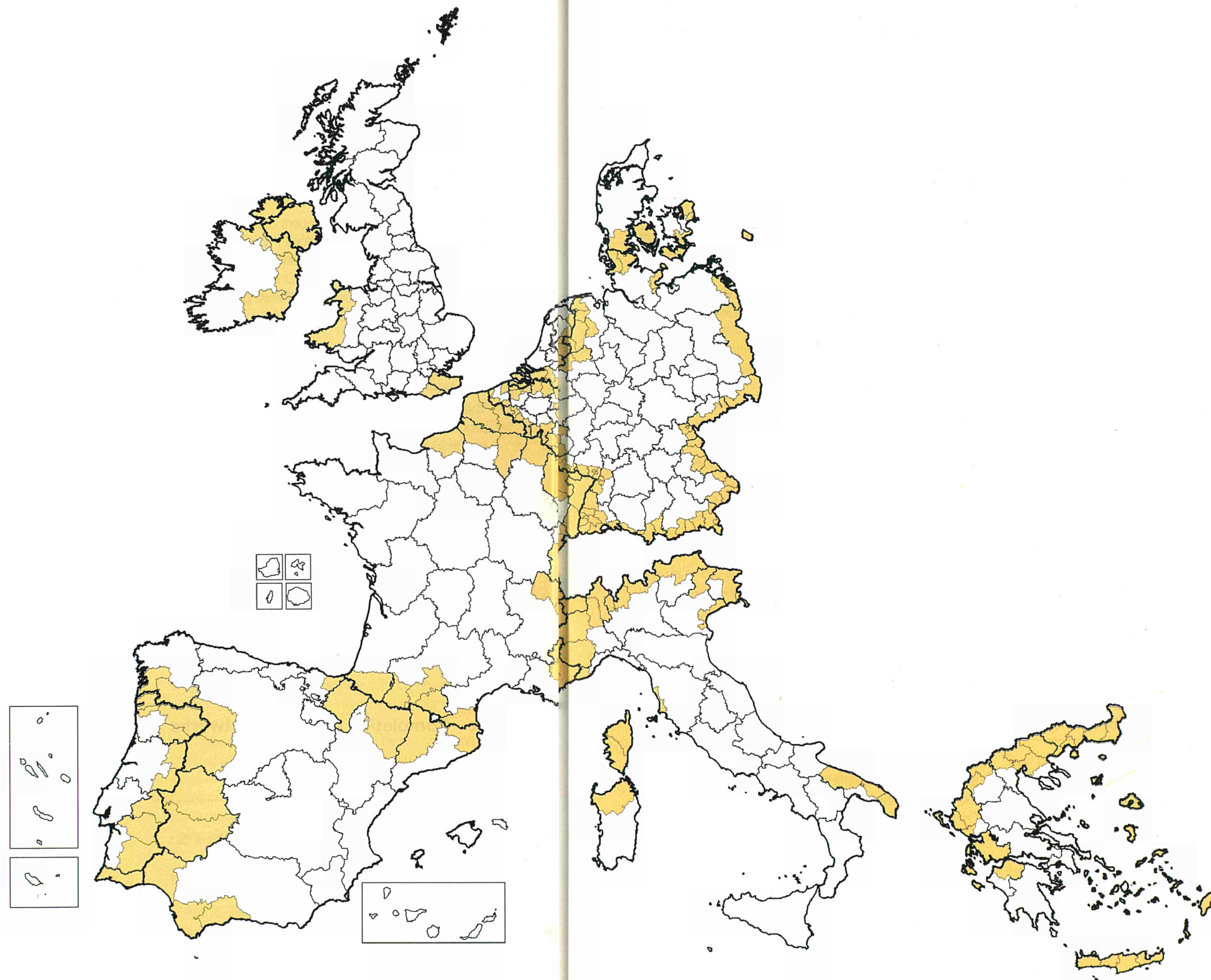
There is specific provision for four projects:

- completion of work on introduction of natural gas into certain regions of Greece;
- completion of work on introduction of natural gas into certain regions of Portugal;
- completion of the interconnection between the Italian and Greek electricity distribution networks;
- introduction of interconnections between the Portuguese and Spanish gas transport systems.

Applications under this strand must state clearly whether any complementary investment will be required elsewhere to ensure smooth operation of the trans-European networks over the period 1994-99.

The Commission's contribution will be based on work

MAP OF INTERREG II AREAS



The list of regions eligible for Interreg II is published in the Official Journal of the European Communities. This map has no legal status.

Background

Decided on in 1991, the Leader Community Initiative enabled local and often innovative approaches to rural development to be tried out. In the forthcoming programming period, Leader II will continue to assist projects put forward by actors at local level. The emphasis will be on the innovative and demonstrative nature of projects, the exchanging of experience and trans-national cooperation.

Purpose

As part of an overall policy to stimulate rural development, Leader II is designed to help rural associations and local government in rural areas to exploit their potential better.

Areas eligible

- Rural areas in regions eligible under Objectives 1 and 5(b) are eligible for Leader II.
- However, no more than 10% of the appropriations allocated by Leader II to Objective 5(b) areas may be used in adjoining rural areas located outside Objective 1 and 5(b) regions.

Leader II provides financial assistance to two types of final beneficiaries:

- firstly, local action groups as defined for the Leader I Initiative, i.e. groups of public and private partners jointly devising a strategy and innovative measures for the development of a local rural area;
- secondly, other rural bodies, public or private (local authorities, chambers of commerce or of agriculture, associations, cooperatives, etc.), provided that their more specialized work contributes to rural development in a local area.

Eligible measures (summary)

- **Acquisition of skills**
Funding of technical assistance upstream of investment projects, particularly in areas where this represents a new departure and at the beginning of the period:
 - analysis of the area;
 - motivating the population;
 - preparing a strategy.
- **Rural innovation programmes**
Capable of serving as models and transferable
 - technical support for rural development;
 - vocational training and aid for recruitment;
 - support for rural tourism, small firms, craft trades and local services;

- local agricultural, forestry and fishery products: increasing value added locally and improving marketing
- safeguarding and improving the environment and living conditions.

- Trans-national cooperation

Devising and implementing joint projects by local operators belonging to at least two Member States.

- Networking

The Initiative is organized around a Community rural development network providing a permanent instrument for the exchange of experience and know-how for all the actors concerned, it includes a Monitoring Unit for Innovation and Rural Development.

Planned allocation

ECU 1 400 million, of which ECU 900 million is to go to Objective 1 regions.

A maximum of ECU 35 million (indicative figure), i.e. 2.5% of the total, will be set aside to fund the activities of the Community network and to support national networks if needed.

Implementation

Except in exceptional and duly justified cases, applications for assistance from the Member States must have reached the Commission by 2 November 1994 in the form of operational programmes and global grants (national or regional).

Programmes and global grants should relate to a region, but where this proves impossible it can be at national level. After they have been negotiated with and adopted by the Commission, they are to be implemented where possible at regional level also. The Commission will no longer be playing a direct part in the selection of projects and beneficiaries.

Background

The aim of the Regis Community Initiative, adopted in 1992, was to foster closer integration into the Community of the most remote regions, i.e. the French overseas departments, Madeira, the Azores and the Canary Islands. To contribute towards the development of each of these regions, there were three specific programmes (Poseidom, Poseima and Poseican).

Purpose

Regis II continues the objectives of Regis but also includes certain schemes eligible under the Structural Funds from the former Poseidom, Poseima and Poseican programmes and measures under other Community Initiatives implemented in the Community's most remote regions.

In this way, the most remote regions can have full access to the Community Initiatives, and in particular to the trans-national cooperation networks.

Implementation of the other Initiatives in the most remote regions is generally to be done as far as possible within the financing framework of Regis II. However, in duly justified cases, some of the appropriations normally allocated to other Community regions can be re-routed to the most remote regions as long as the overall amount allocated to the Member State concerned is not increased.

Areas eligible

Declaration No 26 attached to the Maastricht Treaty confirms the list of the Community's outermost regions, i.e. Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, Réunion (France's overseas departments or DOM: départements d'outre-mer), the Azores and Madeira (Portugal) and the Canary Islands (Spain).

Eligible measures (summary)

- **Diversification of economic activity**
 - diversification of agricultural production;
 - development of "discovery" holidays/adventure tourism outside conventional tourist areas and involving closer contacts with the local population;
 - energy savings and local energy production;
 - modernization and diversification of small businesses;
 - improvement of coastal areas and treatment of waste water and urban and industrial waste;

- schemes eligible under the Leader II and Pesca Initiatives.

- Consolidating links with the rest of the Community

- transport infrastructures and telecommunications;
- exchange of experience with and transfer of know-how from other Community regions.

- Cooperation among the most remote regions

- identification of partners;
- launching of joint schemes;
- development of services relevant to a geographical area extending beyond the Community regions;
- small-scale inter-regional transport infrastructure.

- Precautions against natural disasters, in particular by taking over additional investment costs (e.g. for the security of the energy distribution network)

- Vocational training

- assistance for creating self-employed activities and new, stable jobs;
- training in management, marketing, new technologies, tourism and the environment;
- occupational integration of young people and return of long-term unemployed to the job market;
- measures eligible under the Initiatives Employment and Adapt.

Planned allocation

ECU 600 million.

Loans from the European Investment Bank may also be granted.

Implementation

Member States must have submitted their applications for assistance in the form of operational programmes or global grants by 2 November 1994.

EMPLOYMENT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES (1994-1999)

Background

The inspiration for the "Employment and development of human resources" Initiative is the guidelines set out in the Commission's White Paper on "Growth, Competitiveness and Employment" and the Now and Horizon Community Initiatives launched in 1990. It constitutes an integrated approach based on three interdependent strands:

- Now (equal opportunities for women in the field of employment);
- Horizon (integration into the labour market of disadvantaged and handicapped persons);
- and a new strand Youthstart (integration into the labour market of young people without job qualifications).

Purpose

The aim of this Initiative is to use the development of human resources, improvement of working patterns and the implementation of trans-national measures to support a revival of employment, greater social solidarity throughout the Community and equal opportunities for women on the labour market.

The three strands of the Initiative comprise coordinated measures whose main aims are the improvement of training and employment and innovative practices which will involve those chiefly concerned and take account of needs where a special effort is required.

- **Employment-Now** is intended to improve equal opportunities for women with regard to employment, mainly through measures concerning training and access to high-tech and management jobs.
- **Employment-Horizon** seeks to facilitate access to the employment market for those excluded or threatened with exclusion: the handicapped, the disadvantaged and at-risk groups such as drug addicts, those on the fringes of society, the isolated and homeless, immigrants, refugees, travelling people, convicts and former convicts and the long-term unemployed.
- **Employment-Youthstart** is designed to encourage the integration into the labour market of young people under 20, and in particular those without adequate training or qualifications.

Eligible measures

Each strand includes the following categories of measures to be applied in the fields summarized below:

- (a) better organization of training, guidance and placement systems;

- (b) aid for training in counselling;
- (c) support for the creation of jobs and the establishment of firms;
- (d) information and communication for all concerned and the general public.

• Employment-Now

- (a) - Development of cooperation and of training and employment networks; establishment of guidance and pre-training services and of local services to assist with the establishment of small firms and cooperatives.
- Strengthening links between vocational training bodies and business.
- In the Objective 1 regions: links between training, higher education and firms; innovative educational materials; infrastructure for assistance to individuals.
- (b) - Personalized and flexible training, initial and continuing training (particularly in small firms and exposed sectors); training in business management; in the Objective 1 regions: equal-opportunities training for teachers.
- Innovative assessment to recognize and integrate all of women's activities into their professional career.
- (c) - Cooperation and networking among local employment initiatives for women; creation of self-employed activities, small firms and cooperatives, and financial instruments to support them.
- (d) - Data bases, studies, circulation of good results.

• Employment-Horizon

- (a) - Adaptation of workplaces, particularly through new technologies; introduction of flexible training systems, particularly distance learning and computer-assisted interactive learning.
- In the Objective 1, 2 and 5(b) areas: aid to job-creation for the handicapped and disadvantaged through the establishment of local development agencies and the professional integration of the disadvantaged in urban areas through the development of appropriate services and infrastructure.
- In the Objective 1 regions: adaptation of buildings and transport to facilitate access to training or work; establishment of reception and guidance centres, particularly for new refugees.
- (b) - Training for the handicapped or disadvantaged, particularly in new technologies and skills, and methods of training and assessment responding to the various situations and handicaps, for example on-the-job training modules; promotion of Europe-wide recognition of already acquired skills; training of those responsible for human resources and the organization of work.

- (c) - Development of new types of employment at local level through innovative methods of organization and planning, particularly within firms, and through cooperatives or sheltered employment (by facilitating moving on from such employment); local employment initiatives, particularly involving the social partners as well as the local community.
- (d) - Accessible information for beneficiaries; distribution of codes of good practice, raising awareness among the public, the social partners and teaching staff.

- **Employment-Youthstart**

- (a) - Measures in the public and, where appropriate, private sectors to complement other ESF measures and the Leonardo programme and including the definition of objectives and standards for guidance, training and apprenticeship, placement or assessment; innovative measures for the integration of young people and transfer of models of good practice; links between education, vocational training and the labour market.
- (b) - Measures based primarily on experience of pilot projects or Community programmes such as Leonardo and including programmes for the training and placement of young people which stress a spirit of initiative and are coordinated with local schemes; training of instructors and staff in placement services; acquisition of special experience in certain areas (arts, heritage, environment, urban renewal, assistance to individuals); application of innovative models of local development.
- (c) - Assistance for job-creation, particularly as part of mutual assistance networks, commercial trans-national bodies and relations with young business people in other Member States; trans-national exchanges between local development agencies and local employment initiatives to integrate young people.
- (d) - Support for regional and local information services; promotion of Employment-Youthstart among young people.

Implementation

The Member States must submit their applications for assistance, in the form of operational programmes or global grants, before 2 November 1994.

In the case of trans-national programmes, single applications for assistance and single decisions to grant assistance may be made.

It is proposed to establish specific support structures for the various strands of the Initiative. The national authorities concerned with these Initiatives will consult with those managing other Community programmes to avoid overlapping.

Planned allocation

ECU 1 400 million (Employment-Now: ECU 370 million; Employment-Horizon: ECU 730 million; Employment-Youthstart: ECU 300 million) to cover the whole territory of the Union but with priority to the Objective 1 regions (ECU 800 million).

Background

As the Commission noted in its December 1993 White Paper, in an increasingly competitive environment, growth does not depend solely on rates of investment or improvements in macro-economic conditions. It also requires a first-rate labour force, able to adapt to economic or technological change.

The new Objective 4 of the Structural Funds also seeks to facilitate the adaptation of workers of both sexes to industrial changes and to changes in production systems.

Purpose

Accordingly, the aims of Adapt are to:

- adapt workers to changes;
- improve the competitiveness of firms through training;
- prevent unemployment by improving qualifications;
- create new jobs and fresh activity.

Eligible measures (Summary)

- **Training, advice and guidance**
Identification of changes in the industrial environment, acquisition of new qualifications, guidance and advisory services for workers facing unemployment, training in small businesses, preparation of modernization plans for small businesses.
- **Anticipation, promotion of networks and new employment possibilities**
Establishment of networks responsible for analysing market trends and systems of production and the organization of firms, cooperation in new areas of economic activity, assistance for local initiatives to expand employment.
- **Adaptation of structures and aid systems**
Promotion of cooperation and exchanges between firms, principally by providing structures for shared services (research, marketing), training of instructors on the adaptation of the labour force.
- **Information, dissemination and raising public awareness**
Development of data bases on employment and the adaptation of workers to change, studies in management, organization, technological innovation and the introduction of new production systems, raising awareness in the various sectors of the economy (employment services, employers' and workers' organizations, chambers of commerce and industry).

To receive part-financing under Adapt, these measures must also:

- be innovative;
- have a trans-national dimension;
- give priority to the efficiency and transparency of training systems and services;
- encourage an active approach involving all concerned.

Planned allocation

ECU 1 400 million, including ECU 400 million for the Objective 1 regions.

Implementation

The Member States must submit their applications for assistance, in the form of operational programmes or global grants, before 2 November 1994.

Single applications for assistance and single decisions to grant assistance may be made in the case of trans-national programmes.

It is proposed to establish specific support structures for this Initiative. The national authorities concerned will consult with those managing other Community programmes to avoid overlapping.

Background

The Rechar Community Initiative was adopted by the Commission in 1989 to support the economic conversion of the coal-mining areas of the Community hardest hit by the decline of their industry and of employment.

Purpose

Rechar II will seek the same goal over the period 1994-97 by giving priority to the environment, new economic activities and human resources in order to accelerate the adaptation of the areas concerned to the deterioration in their economic conditions. The measure may also include the effects of the downturn in lignite extraction.

Areas eligible

- Areas already eligible under Rechar I.
- The Member States may propose to the Commission the addition of other areas where coal-mining or lignite extraction takes place provided they are eligible under Objectives 1, 2 or 5(b), are defined as small spatial units (below NUTS level III) or are geographically contiguous groups of such units and satisfy one of the following conditions:
 - at least 1000 coal-mining jobs have been lost since 1 January 1990; or,
 - job losses since that date and future job losses publicly announced amount to at least 1000 jobs; or,
 - at least 1000 coal-mining jobs have been lost since that date or are at risk (as accepted jointly by the Commission and the Member State).
- The Member States may also propose for eligibility other areas highly dependent on the coal-mining industry, taking account of factors such as:
 - high unemployment;
 - environmental degradation;
 - isolation or remote locationIn some cases these areas need not be eligible under Objectives 1, 2 or 5(b).

Eligible measures (Summary)

- Environmental improvement and restoration to other commercial uses of old mining buildings in seriously damaged areas, renovation of social and economic infrastructure in mining villages (community facilities, water, electricity, etc.) as part of an economic redeployment strategy.

- Promotion of new economic activities, and in particular those undertaken by small firms, through various supporting measures (new industrial premises and advance factory units, productive investment, access to risk capital, common services, market studies, cooperation networks and innovation in products and processes).
- Promotion of tourist activities, particularly those based on the industrial heritage.
- Assistance to bodies concerned with economic conversion and regional development.
- Assistance for training and employment, particularly in small firms whose activity is essential for the development of the area, and for the retraining of miners and former miners.
- Interest subsidies on ECSC loans, particularly those for small firms, and any conversion measures eligible for an EIB loan.
- Promotion of cross-border cooperation between coal-mining areas.

Planned allocation

ECU 400 million.

In addition to Community grants, EIB and ECSC loans are available.

Implementation

Member States which wish to add further areas to those already eligible under Rechar should inform the Commission by 2 August 1994. Not later than two months after receipt of these proposals, the Commission will publish the revised list of eligible areas in the Official Journal.

The Member States must submit applications for assistance in the form of operational programmes or global grants to the Commission by 2 November 1994.

The Commission is asking the Member States to include the objective of cooperation among beneficiaries in their programmes in order to encourage the exchange of experience, the dissemination of best practice, joint operations and comparative assessments.

Background

The Resider Community programme was adopted in 1988 to support the economic and social conversion of the steel areas of the Community.

Purpose

Resider II will seek the same goal over the period 1994-97 by giving priority to the environment, new economic activities and human resources in order to accelerate the adaptation of the areas concerned to the deterioration in their economic conditions.

Areas eligible

- The steel areas which the Member States may propose to the Commission are defined as small spatial units (below NUTS level III) or geographically contiguous groups of such units which satisfy one of the following conditions:
 - at least 1000 steel jobs have been lost since 1 January 1986; or,
 - job losses since that date and future job losses publicly announced amount to at least 1000 jobs; or,
 - at least 1000 steel jobs have been lost since that date or are at risk (as accepted jointly by the Commission and the Member State).
- The Member States may also propose for eligibility other areas highly dependent on the steel industry, taking account of other factors such as:
 - high unemployment;
 - environmental degradation;
 - isolation or remote location.

In some cases these areas need not be eligible under Objectives 1, 2 or 5(b).

Eligible measures (Summary)

- Environmental improvement and restoration to new commercial uses of old steel industrial buildings in seriously damaged areas, renovation of social and economic infrastructure in steel areas (community facilities, water, electricity, etc.) as part of an economic redeployment strategy.
- Promotion of new economic activities, and in particular those undertaken by small firms, through various supporting measures (new industrial premises and advance factory units, productive investment, access to risk capital, common services, market studies, cooperation networks and innovation in products and processes).

- Promotion of tourist activities, particularly those based on the industrial heritage.
- Assistance to bodies concerned with economic conversion and regional development.
- Assistance for training and employment, particularly in small firms whose activity is essential for the development of the area, and for the retraining of steel workers and former steel workers.
- Interest subsidies on ECSC loans, particularly those for small firms, and any conversion measures eligible for an EIB loan.

Planned allocation

ECU 500 million.

In addition to Community grants, EIB and ECSC loans are available.

Implementation

Member States which wish to add further areas to those already eligible under Resider should inform the Commission by 2 August 1994. Not later than two months after receipt of these proposals, the Commission will publish the revised list of areas eligible under Resider II in the Official Journal.

- The Member States must have submitted applications for assistance in the form of operational programmes or global grants to the Commission by 2 November 1994.
- The Commission is asking the Member States to include the objective of cooperation among beneficiaries in their programmes in order to encourage the exchange of experience, the dissemination of best practice, joint operations and comparative assessments.

Background

The Commission adopted the special measures Perifra I (1991) and Perifra II (1992) in response to calls from the European Parliament. These included support for demonstration projects which could serve as models for the conversion of military installations, and in 1993 the Commission adopted the Konver Community Initiative to assist regions weakened by the decline of defence industries and installations. Introduced in 1993 as an annual programme, the Initiative is being continued on a multiannual basis extending it up to the end of 1997.

Purpose

Konver provides support for economic diversification in areas heavily dependent on the defence sector, in particular through the conversion of economic activities associated with the sector to make them less dependent on it, and through the encouragement of commercially viable activities in all industrial sectors with the exception of activities that might have military application.

Areas eligible

- The areas proposed to the Commission by the Member States for the Konver Initiative need not be eligible for assistance under Objectives 1, 2 or 5(b); they must be small geographical units (below the level of NUTS III), or contiguous groups of such units, which
 - either have lost at least 1000 jobs in the defence sector since 1 January 1990;
 - or where combined job losses since that date and publicly-announced future job losses total at least 1000;
 - or where jobs of this type lost or at risk since that date (jobs recognized as at risk by both the Commission and the Member State) total at least 1000.
- Member States may also propose integrating other areas heavily dependent on defence activities into the eligible regions, taking account of factors such as:
 - high unemployment rates;
 - poor environmental conditions; and/or
 - the isolation or very remote location of an area.

For Konver purposes, jobs in defence are defined as:

- military personnel, including foreign forces;
- civilian personnel on military bases;
- jobs in companies whose main activity is armaments production.

Eligible measures (Summary):

- Advisory services and equipment (but not production machinery) to improve know-how in businesses: e.g. quality control, computer-assisted design and manufacturing (CAD/CAM), marketing, health and safety, etc.
- Support for local associations of businesses and cooperation schemes, networking and market information systems, with a view to developing the above know-how, accelerating the spread of new production and organisational methods, establishing links between research centres and businesses, businesses and their suppliers and customers, etc.
- Business audits in the above fields by a special taskforce (above all in small and medium-sized businesses), financial engineering schemes.
- Temporary contributions to the payroll for skilled personnel employed as part of modernization plans drawn up with the help of external experts.
- Training of business personnel and business services staff, as well as defence-sector employees who have been made redundant or are threatened with redundancy.
- Environmental improvement of areas damaged by military installations or the defence industry.
- Promotion of alternative activities, in particular by the creation of SMEs.
- Renovation of economic and social infrastructure (public facilities, water, electricity etc.).
- Promotion of tourism.

Planned allocation

ECU 500 million have been allocated to Konver for the period 1994-97, of which at least ECU 250 million is for Objective 1, 2 and 5(b) regions. Loans are also available from the European Investment Bank.

Implementation

Member States' proposals of areas eligible for funding under Konver must have reached the Commission before 2 August 1994. Not more than two months after this notification, the Commission will decide on, and publish in the Official Journal, the list of areas eligible. Member States' applications for assistance in the form of operational programmes or global grants must have reached the Commission by 2 November 1994.

To promote the exchange of experience, the spread of best practices, sharing of operations and comparative assessments, the Commission is asking Member States to include in their programmes the aim of cooperation among beneficiaries.

Background

The Commission launched Retex in 1992 as a Community Initiative to assist areas highly dependent on the textiles and clothing industry. As foreseen in the guidelines published at the time, the Commission has approved a supplementary appropriation to cover Retex schemes in areas which have become newly eligible under Objectives 1, 2 or 5(b), in particular the five new Länder in Germany.

Purpose

Retex is designed to assist with economic diversification in the areas covered, with a view to making them less dependent on the textiles and clothing industry and ease the adjustment of commercially viable businesses in all industries, including the textiles and clothing industry itself.

Areas eligible

- The areas listed as eligible in the guidelines published by the Commission in 1992 are automatically eligible for Retex in 1994-97.
- Member States that so wish can propose to the Commission that other NUTS III areas be integrated into the regions eligible under Retex
 - where they are eligible under Objectives 1, 2 or 5(b) in 1994-99 and
 - where they meet the same dependency criteria as in 1992, namely
 - have at least 2000 jobs in textiles and clothing
 - these jobs account for more than 10% of industrial employment.

Eligible measures (Summary)

- Advisory services and equipment (but not production plant) for improving know-how in businesses: quality control, computer-aided design and manufacturing (CAD/CAM), health and safety, etc.
- Support for local groupings of businesses and for cooperation schemes, networking and market information systems with the aim of developing the above know-how and disseminating new production and organizational methods, and promotion of links between research centres and the business sector, between businesses and their suppliers and customers, etc.

- Business audits in the above fields by a special taskforce (above all in small and medium-sized businesses), feasibility studies, financial engineering schemes.
- Training business personnel and people providing business services, as well as textiles and clothing workers who are unemployed or threatened by redundancy.
- Rehabilitation of industrial wasteland and refurbishing of abandoned industrial premises, help with treating liquid effluents and industrial solid wastes, technical assistance to develop less-polluting processes.

Planned allocation

ECU 500 million. A budget of ECU 430 million was decided on in 1992, plus ECU 70 million for the new areas coming within Retex.

The guidelines published in 1992 also specify the following distribution:

- 80% in Objective 1 regions
- 20% in Objective 2 and 5(b) regions.

Implementation

The proposals from Member States for new Retex areas must have reached the Commission by 2 August 1994.

- Proposals for operational programmes under Retex must have reached the Commission by 2 November 1994.

Background

When agreement was reached on the outcome of the GATT negotiations, the Commission and the Council recognized the special and vital importance to Portugal of the textiles and clothing sector, which accounts for more than one third of its employment and exports. They decided to allocate ECU 400 million from the resources earmarked for the Community Initiatives to modernizing the Portuguese textile industry. This exceptional provision is in addition to the Retex Initiative, which Portugal also qualifies for, and is complementary to the Community support framework for Portugal.

Purpose

The Portuguese textiles and clothing Initiative is designed to assist Portuguese firms in this sector to modernize and so help them adapt to increasing international competition. The grant of Community assistance under this Initiative is subject to approval by the Commission of a strategy for the adaptation of the sector for the period 1994-99. This strategy, to be submitted by the Portuguese authorities, will also define rules governing aid to firms, particularly as regards compliance with the requirement that there should be no increase in Portuguese production capacity in volume terms.

Eligible measures (Summary)

- Financing external expert reports to prepare modernization plans and improve know-how in the fields of design, quality policy, marketing, etc.
- Vocational training linked to the preparation and implementation of modernization plans and retraining for staff unemployed or facing unemployment.
- Contribution towards financing the salaries of managers recruited to implement the modernization plans of small firms.
- Financing modernization plans: non-physical and physical investments (in the case of production equipment, only incentives for access to venture capital and loans receiving interest subsidies from the EIB and other financial bodies are eligible).
- The setting up of promotion and advisory teams to make the sector more aware of the need to improve know-how and develop cooperation among firms.
- Aid for the adaptation of textile and clothing firms to environmental requirements.

Each decision on the financing of modernization plans will include a check by the Portuguese authorities that the plans are consistent with the overall adaptation strategy agreed with the Commission.

Investment projects financed under this Initiative do not form part of a specific aid scheme and so have to comply with the eligibility criteria for existing horizontal aid schemes.

Planned allocation

ECU 400 million, of which ECU 100 million will be used for interest subsidies on loans.

Implementation

Portugal must have submitted its detailed operational programme by 2 November 1994.

Every six months, the Commission and the Portuguese authorities will consider within an appropriate Monitoring Committee whether the agreed overall strategy is being followed.

Background

The Commission's White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment underlines the need for small businesses to adjust to the requirements of the Single Market and to the globalization of national economies. The new Community Initiative for SMEs ('small and medium-sized enterprises') represents in this respect a translation of the ideas in the White Paper into the context of the Structural Funds.

Between 1990 and 1993 there were already three Community Initiatives contributing to the modernization of businesses: Stride on strengthening technology in less-favoured regions, Prisma on improving business services and Telematique on promoting the use of advanced telecommunications services. The SME initiative covers all these aspects.

Purpose

The purpose of the SME Initiative is to assist small and medium-sized businesses, whether industrial or in the services sector, particularly in Objective 1 regions, to adjust to the Single Market and become competitive on international markets.

Areas eligible

Only SMEs situated in areas eligible under Objectives 1, 2 or 5(b) can qualify for financial assistance from the Structural Funds under the SME initiative.

However, SMEs situated outside these areas may also participate in the network activities provided for under the Initiative.

For the purposes of this Initiative, SMEs are defined as businesses that:

- do not employ more than 250 people;
- have an annual turnover which does not exceed ECU 20 million or a balance-sheet total which does not exceed ECU 10 million; and
- have not more than 25% of their capital held by one or more companies not meeting this definition, which are not state-owned holding companies or venture capital companies, nor institutional investors.

Producer cooperatives are, however, eligible under the SME Initiative.

Businesses employing between 250 and 500 people, in particular in Objective 1 regions, can benefit from cer-

tain schemes under the SME Initiative (improvement of know-how and of the commercial environment for SMEs).

Eligible measures (Summary):

- Improvement of production systems and internal organization (total quality systems, technological innovation, management and organizational methods, advanced telecommunications systems).
- Schemes involving the environment and rational use of energy.
- Increasing cooperation between research centres, technology transfer centres, universities, training centres and SMEs for purposes of research and technological development (RTD).
- Access to new markets, public and private, in the Community and elsewhere.
- Development of cooperation and networks among SMEs, their principals, their sub-contractors and their customers.
- Upgrading professional qualifications within SMEs.
- Improving SMEs' access to financing and credit (venture capital, equity participation, interest rebates on EIB and EIF loans).
- Improvement of the commercial environment for SMEs.

Planned allocation

ECU 1 000 million, of which ECU 800 million must go to Objective 1 regions. The remaining ECU 200 million will be allocated to regions eligible under Objectives 2 and 5(b).

Loans will also be available from the European Investment Bank.

Implementation

Member States' applications for assistance in the form of operational programmes or global grants must have reached the Commission by 2 November 1994.

To promote the exchange of experience, the spread of best practices, sharing of operations and comparative assessments, the Commission is asking Member States to include in their programmes the aim of cooperation among beneficiaries.

Background

For some years the Community has contributed to the implementation of urban policies drawn up at national or regional level through the Community support frameworks and through support for innovative measures (pilot projects and cooperation networks under Article 10 of the ERDF Regulation).

In order to extend and improve coordination of these measures from 1994 to 1999, on 2 March 1994 the Commission decided to launch the Urban Community Initiative.

Purpose

Urban is intended to help find solutions to the serious social problems caused by the crisis in many depressed urban areas by supporting schemes for economic and social revitalization, the renovation of infrastructures and facilities and environmental improvement.

The projects, which will normally run for four years, should have a demonstrative character for other urban areas and priority will be given to innovative projects forming part of a long-term strategy for urban integration.

Areas eligible

The Commission intends to part-finance a limited number of urban projects (about 50) in geographically identifiable areas or administrative units:

- situated in conurbations with more than 100 000 inhabitants;
- preferably in Objective 1 regions (these will be given priority);
- suffering from high rates of unemployment, a decaying urban fabric, poor housing and a lack of social facilities.

Exceptionally, smaller towns suffering from overall economic decline could be included among the areas eligible under Urban. Each Member State will send a limited list of proposed projects, in agreement with the local and other authorities concerned.

Eligible measures (Summary)

- **Launching of new economic activities:** assistance and services for small businesses (particularly technology transfer); establishment of workshops, business centres, consultants (management and marketing); public/private partnerships (particularly for integrated economic development programmes).

- **Employment for local people:**

appropriate training (needs of minorities, new technologies such as computer skills in the financial services and commercial sectors); mobile advisory units; programmes to provide work experience for the long-term unemployed, job-intensive projects.

- **Facilities in the health and safety fields:**

nursery and child-care facilities; public-health facilities, anti-drug centres; improved security, crime prevention, better street lighting, involvement of residents in local security.

- **Infrastructure and environment linked to the above:**

renovation of buildings for economic and social purposes; restoration of public areas, including green areas; improved energy efficiency; reclamation of derelict and contaminated land; provision of cultural, recreational and sporting facilities; schemes to facilitate mobility among local inhabitants; access to data-transmission services; workshops to train residents in local-authority housing to renovate and maintain their housing; measures to increase local problem-solving resources, including exchanges of experience and cooperation between cities where such aid is not already being provided under other Community Initiatives or programmes.

Planned allocation

ECU 600 million, including ECU 400 million for the Objective 1 regions and ECU 200 million for other areas, with priority among the latter to those eligible under Objective 2.

Where possible and appropriate, measures should be implemented with due regard to other Community measures and programmes (Poverty IV, Leonardo, measures supported by the EFTA Cohesion Fund and EIB loans).

Implementation

The Member States should have submitted their applications for assistance in the form of operational programmes or global grants by 2 November 1994.

Background

The fishing industry is currently facing a very serious structural crisis: over-capacity of fishing fleets, over-capitalization and over-indebtedness of businesses, not to mention the fragile economic fabric of many coastal regions and the additional problems created by the European Economic Area and the likely enlargement of the European Union.

Purpose

The aim of Pesca is to assist the fishing industry in coping with and mastering the social and commercial consequences of the crisis and to contribute to diversifying the regions affected through the development of job-creating activities.

Areas eligible

- Areas dependent on fisheries in regions also eligible for Objectives 1, 2 or 5(b).
- However, up to ECU 18.75 million (15% of the budget allocated to Pesca in Objective 2 and 5(b) areas) can be spent in areas not covered by any of the three regional Objectives (1, 2 and 5(b)).

The final beneficiaries are:

- public and private sector collective entities (local authorities, chambers of commerce)
- individual entities contributing to diversification (small businesses)
- public and private sector entities with an interest in the changes in the fishing industry (fishermen's cooperatives, non-profit organizations)
- fishermen and other fishing industry workers.

Eligible measures (Summary)

- Diversification of economic activities in the eligible areas: studies of local economic potential; conversion of ports to new activities (tourism, craft industries).
- Business services: aid for the management of restructuring operations and for collaboration between businesses; technology transfers; training in marketing and new technologies.
- Safeguarding and creating jobs: retraining and improving the vocational qualifications of fishermen; recruitment aid and support for geographical mobility.
- Financial engineering: access to the capital market; loan guarantees; shareholdings; financing interest-rate subsidies.

- Concrete projects which are general or trans-national in scope (rationalization of marketing channels, promotion of fishery products, quality marks, studies and research into new markets, joint management of shared fisheries, charting of underwater hazards).
- Investment in production within the industry: improvement of productivity; diversification, especially into tourism; adaptation of production to market potentials.

Planned allocation

ECU 250 million. ECU 125 million are to go to Objective 1 regions.

Implementation

Member States' applications for assistance in the form of integrated operational programmes and global grants must have reached the Commission by 2 November 1994.

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NOTICE TO THE MEMBER STATES

laying down guidelines for operational programmes which Member States are invited to establish in the framework of a Community initiative concerning border development, cross-border cooperation and selected energy networks

(INTERREG II)

(94/C 180/13)

1. At its meeting on 15 June 1994, the Commission of the European Communities decided to establish a Community initiative concerning cross-border cooperation and selected energy networks (hereafter called 'Interreg II') within the meaning of Article 11 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 4253/88, as modified by Council Regulation (EEC) No 2082/93⁽¹⁾, and Article 3(2) of Council Regulation (EEC) No 4254/88, as modified by Council Regulation (EEC) No 2083/93⁽²⁾.

2. In the context of Interreg II, Community assistance in the form of loans and grants and technical assistance is made available for measures and in areas which respect the guidelines laid down in this notice, and which are included in operational programmes and projects submitted by the Member States and approved by the Commission of the European Communities.

I. DEVELOPMENT AIMS

3. The aims of the initiative are:

- to assist both internal and external border areas of the European Union in overcoming the special development problems arising from their relative isolation within national economies and within the Union as a whole, in the interests of the local population and in a manner compatible with the protection of the environment;
- to promote the creation and development of networks of cooperation across internal borders and, where relevant, the linking of these networks to wider Community networks, in the context of the completion of the single market in 1992;
- to assist the adjustment of external border areas to their new role as border areas of a single integrated market;
- to respond to new opportunities for cooperation with third countries in external border areas of the European Union;
- to complete selected energy networks (already defined in the initiative 'Regen' for the period 1989-1993)⁽³⁾ and to link them to wider European networks.

This initiative will be implemented under two distinct strands:

- cross-border cooperation;
- completion of energy networks.

A. Cross-border cooperation

4. Previous experience of efforts to promote cross-border cooperation in the European Union indicates that, in general, three types of actions can be distinguished:

- a) the joint planning and implementation of cross-border programmes;
- b) the introduction of measures to improve the flow of information across borders and amongst border regions, between public agencies, private organisations and voluntary bodies;

⁽¹⁾ OJ No L 193, 31. 7. 1993, p. 24.

⁽²⁾ OJ No L 193, 31. 7. 1993, p. 36.

⁽³⁾ OJ No C 327, 28. 12. 1990, p. 7.

- c) the setting-up of shared institutional and administrative structures to sustain and promote cooperation.

5. In the preparation of operational programmes for submission under the Interreg initiative, Member States and regional and local authorities are encouraged to present agreed proposals for cross-border cooperation as far as possible for the three types of action defined in paragraph 4 above and to develop their strategies for cooperation accordingly.

6. In providing Community assistance under this initiative to border areas, the Commission will accord priority to proposals which are made in cooperation with regional and local authorities in border areas and, in internal border areas, to those which include the establishment or development of shared institutional or administrative structures intended to widen and deepen cross-border cooperation between public agencies, private organisations and voluntary bodies. Where possible, these shared institutional or administrative structures should have the competence to implement jointly determined projects.

7. Measures assisted under this initiative should be designed to have their main development impact on the population of the border areas eligible under this initiative. Particular attention should be given to creating alternative employment opportunities in areas where job losses may arise due to changes in customs and other border-related activities, such as customs agencies.

II. DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE AREAS

8. For the purposes of cross-border cooperation programmes assisted under the initiative, eligible areas include:

- all areas along the internal and external land borders of the Community delineated at administrative level III of the nomenclature of Territorial Statistical Units (NUTS III), as listed in Annex 1 to this notice;
- certain maritime regions delineated at administrative level III of the nomenclature of Territorial Statistical Units (NUTS III), as listed in Annex 1 to this notice.

9. In special cases, and in the context of cross-border cooperation programmes, Community assistance may be given to measures in NUTS III areas located outside, but adjoining, those areas at NUTS III level referred to in paragraph 8, provided that they involve a high degree of cross-border cooperation and do not, as a general rule, account for more than 20 % of the total expenditure of the operational programmes concerned.

10. Infrastructure investments should be concentrated as far as practicable in administrative areas smaller than the NUTS III level, immediately adjacent to borders. However when, within depopulated regions, it is observed that economic development is held up by the absence of road infrastructures, these infrastructures can be exceptionally taken into consideration in the framework of this initiative in an area going beyond the strictly defined NUTS III level, to the extent that the main aim of these infrastructures is related to the development of the regions in question rather than facilitating transit across those regions.

III. ELIGIBLE MEASURES

11. In this section of the notice, a list of measures eligible for assistance under the Interreg II initiative is given below. When submitting operational programmes, Member States are expected to choose from this list a more limited but balanced set of measures on which Community assistance should be concentrated. This choice should have regard to the priorities described in paragraphs 6 and 7 above and to ensuring coherence with the measures in favour of the areas eligible under Interreg II that are envisaged in the context of Community Support Frameworks, in relation to which Interreg II is a complementary action. Community aid under the Interreg II initiative can only be given to areas within the European Union.

12. As regards measures to promote cooperation between internal border areas of the Union, schemes may be assisted provided that a development impact can be foreseen on both sides of the border and that their planning, and where possible implementation, is undertaken on a cross-border basis. Special attention should be paid to creating alternative employment opportunities in border areas affected by significant job losses as a consequence of the completion of the single market.

13. As regards measures for external borders, they should promote development of these areas so that they can adapt to new situations and encourage cooperation between external border areas of the European Union and border areas of neighbouring non-Community countries. Where appropriate, their planning and implementation should be undertaken on a cross-border basis, in conjunction with cross-border schemes supported in the neighbouring non-Community countries under other Community programmes, particularly Phare (currently budget line B7-612).

14. In both cases the following operations may be assisted:

- a) studies related to development plans, treating border areas as an integrated geographical unit;
- b) aids to investment and the provision of services and facilities to support and promote the development of small and medium-sized enterprises and craft industries, in particular, technology transfer and marketing support services; an emphasis should be placed on developing cross-border networks of commercial contacts between SMEs;
- c) the development of tourism (including farm-based tourism) and the development and management for tourism purposes of natural parks through which a border runs;
- d) the provision of local water, gas and electricity supplies and local telecommunications and the development of renewable energy resources; the common development and use of water resources and infrastructures; the treatment of waste water;
- e) pollution prevention and control, rational use of energy, waste disposal and environmental conservation programmes and the monitoring of environmental standards of new industries locating in border areas;
- f) rural development programmes to diversify farmers' incomes and for forestry, fishing, and agricultural waste disposal;
- g) genetic improvement and animal and plant health measures designed to increase agricultural productivity and to facilitate cross-border trade;
- h) measures to improve agricultural products and processes, to promote product diversification, to develop quality labels and trademarks; measures to improve marketing structures and to support cooperative marketing strategies, particularly where these facilitate cross-border trade;
- i) the establishment or development of trade organisations, professional associations, and planning and advisory groups such as cross-frontier development associations or other public, private or voluntary bodies aiming to facilitate cross-border contacts in the economic and social spheres and the provision of language training for this purpose;
- j) in areas seriously deficient in infrastructures, improving transport and other communications systems (including media services) within and between border areas by the creation or modernisation of infrastructures, provided that such operations have their principal development impact on the areas concerned on both sides of the border or are a response to problems directly linked to the existence of borders;

- k) measures to promote cooperation in the fields of education and culture, including the joint use of resources and facilities on a cross-border basis, including cooperation at higher education level, between research centres, universities and in vocational training;
- l) training and employment measures particularly for the unemployed and for women and for persons directly or indirectly affected by changes in border related activities arising from the establishment of a single market and related to measures described in subparagraphs a) to k);
- m) measures to promote cooperation in health, particularly the sharing of resources and facilities on a cross-border basis;
- n) measures in the fields of energy, telecommunications and transport, aimed at complementing the development of Trans-European Networks;
- o) special measures to relieve the problems arising from the existence of different languages, administrative procedures and legal systems on either side of national borders;
- p) measures to support the preparation and implementation of cross-border spatial planning and for the development of the urban systems of border areas;
- q) measures which facilitate the prevention of illicit trade across external borders.

15. Within the framework of technical assistance, the Commission will:

- provide assistance to Member States, regional and local authorities and other interested parties, especially in Objective 1 regions, in the preparation and implementation of cross-border cooperation programmes;
- promote and facilitate the exchange of information and experience between border regions of the European Union and the exchange of personnel between different border regions;
- organise bilateral or multilateral meetings between Member States to facilitate cooperation.

B. Completion of energy networks

16. The aims are:

- to accelerate the creation of infrastructures for the reception and transmission of natural gas in peripheral regions where these do not exist at present;
- to accelerate the completion of Community-wide networks for the transmission and distribution of gas and exceptionally electricity, so as to ensure appropriate interconnections between peripheral regions of the Community and the rest of the Community.

17. These projects should help improve the competitiveness of productive activities, and particularly that of industry in the regions concerned, and enable these regions to take best advantage of the completion of the single market in energy. They should also contribute to creating the necessary conditions for more efficient energy management and greater security of supply in the Community. They should, in addition, contribute in regions receiving natural gas supplies for the first time to reduce pollution linked with energy use.

IV. ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

18. Under this initiative, the following projects have been chosen to receive Community assistance, depending on their degree of progress and the estimated expenditure over the period 1994-1999:

- the completion of reception facilities and transmission networks for the introduction of natural gas into certain parts of Portugal and Greece;
- completion of the interconnection between the electricity networks of Italy and Greece;
- the establishment of interconnections between the gas transport systems of Portugal and Spain.

V. THE COMMUNITY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE FINANCING OF INTERREG II

19. The Interreg II operational programmes and projects shall be the subject of joint financing by the Member States and the Community. The total contribution by the European Community's Structural Funds to Interreg II during the period 1994-1999 is estimated at ECU 2 900 million. Community resources will be concentrated mainly in Objective 1 regions in accordance with the priorities established in the regulations governing the Structural Funds.

Loans from EIB and ECSC resources may also be made available. For the regions of eastern and central European countries neighbouring the Union's external borders, cross-border activities can be assisted by Phare. Within the total amount of ECU 2 900 million, approximately ECU 2 400 million will be allocated to the first strand covering cross-border cooperation and in the order of ECU 500 million to the strand involving completion of energy networks.

Community expenditure under the strand covering cross-border cooperation in regions not classified as eligible under Objectives 1, 2 and 5(b) should be a limited part of the total Community contribution of ECU 2 400 million; 75% of the available resources will be devoted to Objective 1 regions.

20. As regards the strand covering cross-border cooperation, the Commission's decisions on the amount of the Community budget contribution to individual operational programmes will reflect the population and level of development of the border areas concerned and the quality of the programmes submitted. The rates of assistance will be decided in conformity with the provisions of the regulations governing the Structural Funds and take account of the financing capacity of the national and regional authorities concerned. In evaluating the quality of programmes, the Commission will take into account the following elements in particular:

- the presence of a coherent regional strategy for the border areas concerned, seen as a single geographical unit, with a reasonable combination of structural measures and measures to foster human resources and with a clear statement of the development aims, quantified where appropriate, into which the aims of the operational programmes have been properly integrated;
- the likely development impact of the proposed measures within the areas eligible for this initiative, taking into account deficiencies in infrastructures and services and the consequences for employment of the removal of internal borders;
- for internal border areas within the Community, the contribution that the proposed measures will make to promoting cross-border cooperation across as wide a number of fields as possible and thus assist the completion of the internal market;
- for external borders, the contribution that the proposed measures will make to promoting cross-border cooperation across as wide a number of fields as possible with neighbouring non-Community countries;
- the character of the resources requested from the Community as additional to those to be made available by the national and regional authorities for the operational programme;

- the likely effectiveness of the mechanisms for implementation, monitoring and evaluation; and the degree of involvement of regional and local authorities in the implementation of such programmes; in the case of border areas within the Union, joint mechanisms should be envisaged.

21. As regards the strand involving the completion of energy networks, applications submitted under this initiative should identify clearly any requirements for complementary investment elsewhere in the Community's energy transmission and distribution networks necessary for the proper operation of the projects which it is intended to implement in the period 1994-1999. Community assistance under this initiative will be conditional upon an undertaking by the responsible authorities that they will undertake these complementary investments at an appropriate time.

22. The Community's contribution will take account, in particular, of:

- the estimate by the Commission, in consultation with the European Investment Bank, of the work that is likely to be carried out in the period 1994-1999, and the resulting requirement for Community payment appropriations, where relevant, in addition to those already provided under Community support frameworks;
- an assessment of the financial plans for these projects, so as to ensure the appropriate balance between grant and loan finance. The Commission may request an independent assessment of the costing and financial plan proposed.

23. Cost-benefit analyses submitted in relation to proposed projects should include:

- the justification for the choice of route and the capacity of the system;
- the expected internal rate of return of the investment;
- other benefits, for example in terms of the cost of energy to users in the regions and the better management and greater security of energy supplies for the regions in question and for the Community as a whole;
- the environmental impact of the projects.

24. The Commission will make available technical assistance as required for the design, financing and implementation of projects under this initiative.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION

25. Member States wishing to benefit from Interreg II are invited to present detailed proposals for operational programmes, or amendments to an existing or proposed operational programme or projects in application of Community Support Frameworks, within four months of the date of publication of this notice in the Official Journal of the European Communities. Proposals received after this date need not be taken into consideration by the Commission. The two strands of Interreg will be managed separately.

26. As regards the strand concerning cross-border cooperation, proposals relating to internal border areas in the European Union should be submitted in the form of a single operational programme by the two or more Member States concerned. The structures and procedures for the implementation of the programme on a cross border basis, where appropriate, should be indicated. Where relevant, expenditure related to areas which are not Objectives 1, 2 or 5(b) areas is to be shown separately.

Proposals relating to each external border in the European Union should be submitted by the Member State concerned in the form of a single operational programme covering, where appropriate and practicable, measures on both sides of the border and indicating the measures or parts of measures for which assistance under the Structural Funds regulations is requested.

The neighbouring countries should submit their requests for the cross-border projects or programmes for which assistance is sought under other Community programmes, in particular Phare, on the basis of the relevant procedures. In order to facilitate the implementation of cross-border projects and measures, appropriate coordination procedures should be established between the Member States and non-Community countries concerned in association with the Commission.

The proposals must include an appreciation of the situation indicating the objectives to be attained and should include a timetable, criteria and procedures for implementation, monitoring and assessment. During and at the end of the planning period the Commission shall evaluate, in partnership with the Member States, the results of the programmes submitted. The European Parliament, the Management Committee on the Community initiatives and the monitoring committees shall be informed of the results of such evaluations and the action taken in response to them.

27. As regard the strand concerning the completion of energy networks, for projects where the Commission has already financed or been associated with the implementation of the necessary feasibility studies and these studies have been satisfactorily concluded, Member States should submit detailed proposals as soon as possible, taking account of the requirements indicated above.

For projects where feasibility studies have not yet been completed, Member States should submit proposals for Community assistance for any further studies required as soon as possible. When all necessary preparatory studies have been completed, and provided that the results of these studies justify a decision to implement the projects, Member States should submit appropriate detailed project proposals, taking account of the requirements indicated above.

Where a transnational gas or electricity interconnection is proposed, a single proposal should be submitted by the Member States concerned.

28. All correspondence relating to this notice should be addressed to:

Mr E. Landaburu,
Director-General,
Directorate-General for Regional Policies,
Commission of the European Communities,
Rue de la Loi, 200,
B-1049 Brussels.

ANNEX

LIST OF BORDER REGIONS (NUTS III) ELIGIBLE UNDER INTERREG

Classified by Objectives 1, 2, 5b

BELGIË/BELGIQUE

Objective 1

Ath
Mons
Mouscron
Thuin
Tournai

Objective 2

Arlon⁽¹⁾
Liège (Arr)
Maaseik⁽¹⁾
Tongeren⁽¹⁾
Turnhout⁽¹⁾
Verviers⁽¹⁾

Objective 5b

Bastogne
Dinant⁽¹⁾
Ecklo⁽¹⁾
Ieper⁽¹⁾
Neufchâteau
Philippeville⁽¹⁾
Veurne⁽¹⁾

Not classified

Antwerpen (Arr)
Brugge
Gent
Kortrijk
Sint-Kiklaas
Virton

DANMARK

Objective 2

Storstroms Amtskommune⁽¹⁾

Objective 5b

Bornholms Amtskommune⁽¹⁾
Fyns Amtskommune⁽¹⁾
Sonderjyllands Amtskommune⁽¹⁾
Storstroms Amtskommune⁽¹⁾

Not classified

Frederiksborg Amtskommune
København Og Frederiksberg
Kommuner
Københavns Amtskommune

BR DEUTSCHLAND

Objective 1

Annaberg
Barnim
Bautzen
Cottbus, Kriesfreie Stadt
Elstertalkreis

Frankfurt (Oder), Kriesfreie Stadt
Freiberg
Göltzschtalkreis
Görlitz, Stadtkreis
Greifswald, Stadtkreis
Märkiisch-Oderland
Mittlerer Erzgebirgskreis
Niederschlesischer Oberlausitz-
kreis
Oder-Spree
Ostvorpommern
Plauen, Stadtkreis
Sächsische Schweiz
Sächsischer Oberlausitzkreis
Spree-Neiße
Uckermark
Ucker-Randow
Weißeritzkreis
Westerzgebirgskreis

Objective 2

Emden, Kriesfreie Stadt⁽¹⁾
Grafschaft Bentheim⁽¹⁾
Heinsberg⁽¹⁾
Hof, Kriesfreie Stadt
Pirmasens, Landkreis⁽¹⁾
Pirmasens, Kriesfreie Stadt
Saarbrücken, Stadtverband⁽¹⁾
Saarlouis⁽¹⁾
Zweibrücken, Kriesfreie Stadt⁽¹⁾

Objective 5b

Aachen, Landkreis⁽¹⁾
Aurich⁽¹⁾
Bitburg-Prüm
Breisgau-Hochschwarzwald⁽¹⁾
Cham
Daun
Emsland⁽¹⁾
Euskirchen⁽¹⁾
Freyung-Grafenau
Grafschaft Bentheim⁽¹⁾
Hof, Landkreis
Leer⁽¹⁾
Lörrach⁽¹⁾
Merzig-Wadern⁽¹⁾
Neustadt an der Waldnaab
Nordfriesland⁽¹⁾
Oberallgäu⁽¹⁾
Passau, Landkreis
Regen
Rottal-Inn
Saar-Pfalz-Kreis⁽¹⁾
Schleswig-Flensburg⁽¹⁾
Schwandorf
Tirschenreuth
Trier-Saarburg
Waldshut⁽¹⁾
Wunsiedel im Fichtelgebirge

Not classified

Aachen, Kriesfreie Stadt
Altötting
Bad Tötz-Wolfratshausen
Baden-Baden, Stadtkreis
Berchtesgadener Land

Bodenseekreis
Borken
Emmendingen
Flensburg, Kriesfreie Stadt
Freiburg im Breisgau, Stadtkreis
Garmisch-Partenkirchen
Germersheim
Karlsruhe, Landkreis
Karlsruhe, Stadtkreis
Kaufbeuren, Kriesfreie Stadt
Kempten (Allgäu), Kriesfreie Stadt
Kleve
Konstanz
Landau in der Pfalz
Lindau-Bodensee
Lubeck, Kriesfreie Stadt
Miesbach
Ortenaukreis
Ostallgäu
Ostholfstein
Passau, Kriesfreie Stadt
Rastatt
Rosenheim, Kriesfreie Stadt
Rosenheim, Landkreis
Schwarzwald-Baar-Kreis
Steinfurt
Südliche Weinstraße
Traunstein
Trier, Kriesfreie Stadt
Viersen
Weiden in der OPf, Kriesfreie
Stadt

ELLAS

Objective 1

Achaia
Aitolakarnania
Chania
Chios
Dodekanisos
Drama
Evros
Florina
Ioannina
Irakleio
Kastoria
Kavala
Kefallinia
Kerkyra
Kilkis
Lasithi
Lefkada
Lesvos
Pella
Preveza
Rethymni
Rodopi
Samos
Serres
Thesprotia
Thessaloniki
Xanthi
Zakinthos

⁽¹⁾ Partly classified under objective 1, 2 or 5b.

ESPAÑA	Haute-Savoie ⁽¹⁾ Hautes-Alpes Jura ⁽¹⁾ Meurthe-et-Moselle ⁽¹⁾ Meuse Moselle ⁽¹⁾ Pyrénées-Atlantiques ⁽¹⁾ Pyrénées-Orientales ⁽¹⁾ Savoie ⁽¹⁾	LUXEMBOURG (G.D.) Objective 2 and 5b Luxembourg (Grand-Duché) ⁽¹⁾
Objective 1 Badajoz Cáceres Cádiz Ceuta Huelva Málaga Melilla Orense Pontevedra Salamanca Zamora	IRELAND Objective 1 Donegal East North East North West South East	NEDERLAND Objective 2 Arnhem-Nijmegen ⁽¹⁾ Oost-Groningen Twente ⁽¹⁾ Zuid-Limburg ⁽¹⁾ Zuidoost-Drenthe Zuidoost-Noord-Brabant
Objective 2 Gerona ⁽¹⁾ Guipuzcoa ⁽¹⁾ Navarra ⁽¹⁾		Objective 5b Midden-Limburg ⁽¹⁾ Noord-Limburg ⁽¹⁾ Noord-Overijssel ⁽¹⁾ Zeeuwsch-Vlaanderen ⁽¹⁾
Objective 5b Gerona ⁽¹⁾ Guipuzcoa ⁽¹⁾ Huesca Lérida ⁽¹⁾ Navarra ⁽¹⁾	ITALIA Objective 1 Bari Brindisi Lecce Sassari	Not classified Achterhoek Midden-Noord-Brabant Overig Zeeland West-Noord-Brabant
FRANCE		PORTUGAL
Objective 1 Corse du Sud Haute Corse Nord ⁽¹⁾	Objective 2 Gorizia ⁽¹⁾ Livorno ⁽¹⁾ Novara ⁽¹⁾ Torino ⁽¹⁾ Trieste ⁽¹⁾ Udine ⁽¹⁾ Valle d'Aosta ⁽¹⁾ Varese ⁽¹⁾ Venezia ⁽¹⁾	Objective 1 Alentejo Central Algarve Alto Alentejo Alto Tras-Os-Montes Baixo Alentejo Beira Interior Norte Beira Interior Sud Cavado Douro Minho-Lima
Objective 2 Aisne ⁽¹⁾ Ardennes ⁽¹⁾ Doubs ⁽¹⁾ Haut-Rhin ⁽¹⁾ Hautes-Pyrénées ⁽¹⁾ Meurthe-et-Moselle ⁽¹⁾ Moselle ⁽¹⁾ Nord ⁽¹⁾ Pas-de-Calais ⁽¹⁾ Pyrénées-Atlantiques ⁽¹⁾ Seine Maritime ⁽¹⁾ Somme Territoire de Belfort ⁽¹⁾	Objective 5b Belluno ⁽¹⁾ Bolzano-Bozen ⁽¹⁾ Como ⁽¹⁾ Cuneo ⁽¹⁾ Imperia ⁽¹⁾ Livorno ⁽¹⁾ Novara ⁽¹⁾ Udine ⁽¹⁾ Valle d'Aosta ⁽¹⁾ Venezia ⁽¹⁾ Vercelli ⁽¹⁾	UNITED KINGDOM Objective 1 Northern Ireland (other than Belfast)
Objective 5b Ain ⁽¹⁾ Alpes-de-Haute-Provence Alpes-Maritimes ⁽¹⁾ Ariège Bas-Rhin ⁽¹⁾ Doubs ⁽¹⁾ Haut-Rhin ⁽¹⁾ Haute-Garonne ⁽¹⁾ Hautes-Pyrénées ⁽¹⁾	Not classified Sondrio	Objective 2 Dyfedd ⁽¹⁾ Kent ⁽¹⁾ Gibraltar ⁽¹⁾ Objective 5b Dyfedd ⁽¹⁾ Gwynedd Not classified East Sussex

⁽¹⁾ Partly classified under objective 1, 2 or 5b.

NOTICE TO THE MEMBER STATES

laying down guidelines for global grants or integrated operational programmes for which Member States are invited to submit applications for assistance in the framework of a Community initiative for rural development

(LEADER II)

(Liaisons Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale)
(Links between actions for the development of the rural economy)

(94/C 180/12)

1. At its meeting on 15 June 1994 the Commission of the European Communities, acting under Article 11 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 4253/88⁽¹⁾, as amended by Regulation (EEC) No 2082/93, decided to establish a Community initiative which would serve as a model for rural development, hereinafter referred to as Leader II (Liaisons Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale — Links between actions for the development of the rural economy).

2. Under Leader II, Community assistance in the form of global grants or integrated operational programmes may be provided to permit those engaged in the rural economy to implement measures in accordance with the guidelines laid down in this notice.

I. OBJECTIVES

3. Under the Leader I (1991-1993) Community initiative, local, often innovative, approaches to rural development were tried out. This experiment proved the value of such an approach, which enabled those involved and rural areas to develop their own potential within an overall policy for stimulating rural development.

4. Reactions to the Commission Green Paper on the Community initiatives⁽²⁾ and to the Leader initiative (more than 250 answers, often collective, representing several thousand bodies or authorities involved in rural development) have stressed that this approach should be continued more vigorously and with better coordination through the introduction of more ambitious aims and stiffer requirements to ensure the quality of the projects financed.

5. However diverse rural areas in the Community may be, they are generally affected, to differing degrees (reflected in their classification under one or other of the Structural Funds Objectives), by marked trends (decline in employment and in agricultural activity, departure of the best educated young people, increase in rural unemployment and in the number of people in insecure circumstances, growing isolation as a result of the disappearance of certain services for businesses and private persons, damage to the environment) which are reducing the attractiveness of the countryside.

6. Faced with this situation, those responsible within institutions and those engaged in rural development agree that the countryside is undergoing a major transformation and that new orientations, new forms of development and new measures bringing together the various parties concerned must be sought. It is also admitted that as yet there has been little success in identifying these new directions and that European cooperation would be a powerful means of achieving this and disseminating experience throughout the Community.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No L 374, 31. 12. 1988, p. 20.

⁽²⁾ COM(93) 282. 'The Future of Community initiatives under the Structural Funds'.

The aim of Leader II will therefore be to stimulate innovative measures by those, whether public or private, engaged at local level in all sectors of rural activity, to make known the results of these experiments throughout the Community and to assist rural operators in different Member States who wish to profit from the lessons learnt elsewhere and to work jointly on some projects.

II. ARRANGEMENTS

7. The various elements of Leader II are organized around a European rural development network, which provides a framework for the circulation of information on rural development policies, the exchange of experience among those involved in rural development, the spreading of innovation and know-how, in particular to assist the most handicapped rural areas, and the setting up of joint projects.

The partners in this rural cooperation network have very varied requirements and capacities, and Leader II must be able to respond to these flexibly and, where necessary, in successive stages. Some partners need first and foremost to acquire skills (category (a)) in order to initiate an integrated development process in areas where this is new. Subsequently, or for other more advanced partners, the need is rather for finance for specific innovative operations serving as models of development for particular geographical areas (run by local action groups) or for particular thematic aspects (run by other collective bodies) on the basis of a previously agreed analysis and strategy (category (b)). Finally, many local collective bodies and many rural operators are or will be in a position to take a further step forward in qualitative terms by cooperating directly on specific projects of a transnational nature (category (c)), after having made contact through the network.

Thus it is in the nature of these arrangements that they should evolve over time: during the 6-year implementation period the emphasis may gradually shift, at a pace appropriate to each region, from technical assistance measures towards transnational cooperation projects.

III. BENEFICIARIES

8. Leader II can assist two categories of final beneficiaries:

- principally, local action groups as defined by Leader I, i.e. a combination of public and private partners jointly devising a strategy and innovative measures for the development (or one aspect of the development) of a rural area on the scale of a local community (less than 100 000 inhabitants as a rough guide). These partners are allocated an administrative and financial lead agency with the capacity to manage grants from public funds. The lead agency will ensure full participation by all the local partners concerned (leading figures in the economic and social life of the various sectors and associations concerned with the environment, culture and social integration);
- secondarily, other rural collective bodies, public or private (for example, Chambers of agriculture, industry, commerce, or crafts, cooperatives, business groups, groups of local authorities, non-profit-making organizations), provided that their more specific activities relate to a plan for the rural development of a local area.

Leader II is applicable in Objective 1 and Objective 5(b) regions. However, a maximum of 10% of funds allocated to Objective 5(b) areas under Leader II may be used outside Objective 1 and 5(b) regions, in adjoining rural areas.

In the most remote regions of the Community (the French overseas departments, the Azores, Madeira and the Canary Islands), the Leader II initiative will, as a priority, be implemented under the Regis II initiative, in full compliance with the provisions set out in the notice concerning Leader II.

IV. ELIGIBLE MEASURES

9. *Measure a) — Acquiring skills*

Technical assistance for local development should be provided on request with a view to initiating an integrated development process in areas where this practice is new. This measure concerns the financing of technical assistance prior to investment (analysing the area's needs while taking account of the wishes of local people, motivating and training local people to participate actively in the development process, establishing links between local partners, drawing up a strategy, finding finance etc.). The nature of the measures, the characteristics of the beneficiaries and the type of body responsible for implementation should be clearly specified.

This measure should be strongly represented at the beginning of the programming period and ceilings will be established in partnership with each Member State.

10. *Measure b) — Rural innovation programmes*

In all matters related to rural development, priority should be given to programmes for local action and investment which, besides having links with a more general (regional or local) rural development strategy and providing the necessary continuity with earlier measures in the area in question (particularly if it received assistance under Leader I), should have three key features: they should be innovative in the local context (in terms of method, product, production process or market), they should be capable of serving as models, and they should be transferable. These 'projects of excellence' should illustrate the new directions that rural development may take. They are promoted by either collective or public bodies (in cooperation with others professionally involved and associations) following the model of Leader I (overall local development aspects), or by other rural collective bodies.

11. *Innovation*

By making innovation and the capacity to serve as a model the criteria for eligibility for this category of Leader II, the Commission does not wish to restrict the operational scope of the initiative to a few avant-garde operations of little potential use elsewhere but wishes to ensure that the programmes financed contribute real added value in relation to other operations part-financed by the operational programmes or other forms of assistance under the Community Support Frameworks, and do not serve to finance activities already being carried out by others engaged in the rural development process. The innovative and model nature of projects should thus be adapted to the type of area.

Whether the projects emanate from local groups (integrated local approach) or from other rural collective bodies (with a more sectoral or thematic approach), they must meet the basic common criteria for eligibility (see Annex I) and offer innovative elements to be assessed in relation to the area and to the content of the rural development operational programme under the Community Support Framework for that area.

The innovation criteria for the area in question will be specified in the application for assistance and will be negotiated in partnership when these applications are considered. The innovative nature of the project must not be confined to the method (on the model of Leader I), but must also be apparent in the technical content of the project, whether in the product, the production process, the market or some other aspect. These innovations may concern the purely economic aspects, but may also be, for example, cultural, environmental or related to social integration if these aspects are closely linked to rural development.

The Commission is proposing, by way of illustration, a series of subjects lending themselves to innovation (on which technical dossiers that draw on the many innovations made possible by Leader I will be offered to the partners concerned):

- measures, including environmental and renewable energy aspects to offset the impact of the reform of the common agricultural policy;
- application of new information and communication technologies in the rural environment;
- provision of services adapted to low population density, including as an additional source of income;
- devising and marketing new products and services;
- job creation in the rural environment, including the integration into the labour market of persons in difficult circumstances and involving educational and training institutions in rural development;
- the production and promotion of cultural activities in the rural environment as a contribution to local identity and a tourist attraction;
- raising the awareness of the local population of what is to be gained from development and their own capacity to take initiatives.

Local groups' projects and those of other collective operators will thus have to demonstrate their:

- difference and novelty in relation to what is being done under the operational programme under the CSF (or Single Programming Document) covering the same area, in terms of approach to rural development and implementation details and/or content of the measures;
- expected impact (in terms of at least temporary comparative advantage for the area or the sector) in relation to a reference situation (which will involve an analysis that clearly shows the obstacle to development which the innovation is intended to overcome).

The local groups that have benefited from Leader I are in no way excluded from benefiting from Leader II. However, they will be required to submit a proposal that meets the innovation criteria as defined in partnership with the area concerned.

12. *Suitability as model and transferability*

These two criteria are linked and mean that those in charge of the project must:

- identify the conditions under which the innovation concerned can emerge, in order to assess its capacity to be reproduced and the cost thereof (transfer of know-how and/or technology);
- ensure that the project is to some extent 'visible' and implement communication measures; and
- show the project's potential in market terms where the sale of goods or services is involved.

The promoters of the project will also have to undertake to make what they learn about methodology available to the network.

Finally, each year a European competition could award prizes to the best projects with regard to the basic characteristics of the initiative (innovation, suitability as a model and transferability).

13. *Measure c) — Transnational cooperation*

In this case the projects are undertaken at the initiative of potential local beneficiaries (defined under section III) that belong to at least two Member States. The Leader II initiative will assist with the joint design, production and marketing of goods or services in any area of rural development. This category depends very much on the existence of the network, which will facilitate the emergence of transnational cooperation. In this case innovation is not mandatory, since the cooperation itself constitutes an innovation for most of the areas and operators concerned.

This measure, which is not a condition for eligibility under the Leader programme, would, in most cases, appear progressively after the network has been operating for some time, has made known the practical innovative experience already acquired in many Member States but as yet little known and has provided technical assistance for establishing cooperation. In the case of the Leader programme, some additional costs related to the transnational nature of the enterprise may also be part-financed.

14. *Measure d) — Networking*

The development of active solidarity between rural areas and the exchange of achievements, experience and know-how between all parties concerned in the Community is a priority of Leader II which involves extending the present Leader network for the benefit of all those participating in rural development: national authorities and their decentralized services, local collective bodies, local development groups, the social and economic partners and associations.

The present network must also expand its activities, in particular by establishing a methodological instrument, hereinafter referred to as the 'European Observatory of Rural Innovation and Development', whose role will be to identify, specify, validate and facilitate the transfer of innovations implemented in rural environments. The network's activities will concern the Community as a whole, since innovation is needed throughout the Member States.

Active participation in the network is mandatory for all direct beneficiaries of Leader II (local groups and other local operators), which will have a number of obligations (feeding the Observatory's data base, publicizing results, making acquired expertise available) which will, in turn, enable them to benefit from the network. The other participants are also invited to make their experience, know-how and projects available to the network.

The European network for rural development (Leader network) will neither replace nor constitute an umbrella network for existing national or transnational networks of public authorities or associations. It is conceived as a meeting point of these different networks and will seek to facilitate the work of some of them, by coordinating their activities and delegating to them certain organizational and information functions to be selected in partnership with the Member States.

Specifically, the network's organizational structure will have to provide the following services at Community level:

- gathering, processing and disseminating information on Community measures to assist rural development and on innovative and model practices in rural environments (data bases, internal and external publications, electronic mail network);
- organizing contact among beneficiaries of Leader II and providing technical assistance for transnational cooperation (seminars, visits by experts);
- using and processing the assessment work attached to each national or regional Leader programme;
- organizational and technical support for national networks and non-governmental organizations identified in partnership with the Member States as having proved their added value in respect of rural development and as necessary for the good functioning of Leader II; and
- technical assistance for national authorities and local collective bodies to facilitate cooperation and the exchange of expertise between authorities responsible for rural development.

The administrative and organizational tasks relating to the operation of the network, to be closely monitored by the Commission, will, in the main, be allocated to external providers of services on the basis of an invitation to tender to be published in the Official Journal.

V. IMPLEMENTATION

15. In keeping with the principle of subsidiarity, the implementation of Leader II will be as decentralized as possible, respecting the competences of each local collective body. The Commission will negotiate, in partnership with the Member State, the content of regional or national programmes and will no longer intervene directly in the selection of projects and beneficiaries (action groups and other local collective bodies) except where the partners responsible fail to act. This approach means, on the one hand, drawing up detailed specifications of eligibility, (Annex I to this notice) and, on the other, stepping up monitoring, assessment and checking procedures.

16. The following system will be established with regard to the institutional arrangements of each Member State:

- a) at the regional level (whether the regions concerned have institutional competences or are programming regions with specific operational programmes under the Community Support Framework) or, where that proves impossible at the regional level, at the national level a 'planning and decision making partnership' will be established, whose scope will be at least as wide as that of the operational programmes under the Community support frameworks, and which will include, at a minimum, all those who will provide part-finance at national level (State, region, other local collective bodies). These partners will draw up a regional Leader programme which will be a synthesis of specific operations already submitted by potential local beneficiaries (local groups and other collective bodies). This summary should use examples to illustrate the type of measures to be implemented, demonstrating their appropriateness to the objectives of the initiative (innovation, capacity to serve as a model, transferability) and to the eligibility criteria defined in this notice. The programme should be structured as shown in Annex 2.

The opinions of the other local and regional public authorities and rural partners concerned, whether administrative or professional bodies (Chambers of agriculture, commerce, industry, crafts, Tourist Offices etc.) or associations (in particular in the field of culture, environment and social integration) must be sought and, unless otherwise agreed through partnership, attached to the programme. At this stage, it is important to demonstrate that the programme is not a mere theoretical construction but aims to implement an innovative strategy for developing local potential, with reference to specific needs and to projects formulated by local people and local operators with a view to improving the economic situation of the area or sector concerned. The programme must also adduce proof that public part-financing is available to this end.

The programme must distinguish between the different eligible measures:

- acquiring skills;
 - local action groups, whose programmes will be funded under a single measure financed by the three Structural Funds, in order to enhance flexibility;
 - other collective rural operators (also in the form of a single multifund measure);
 - transnational cooperation. This measure will have to be the subject of a token entry in the regional programme, to be completed subsequently on the basis of a specification to be adopted by the competent Monitoring Committee. It should be noted that the criteria of innovativeness and capacity to function as a model do not apply to this measure;
- b) after submission, these programmes are considered by the Commission and negotiated in partnership with the Member State, taking account of the priorities given to innovation, capacity to serve as a model and transferability, on the one hand, and to the rural character of the projects and their involvement of the rural population on the other. The regional level partners are then allocated a budget by a Commission Decision. The form of the budget is to be decided in partnership (operational programme, integrated global grant committed in the form of annual instalments in order to assure greater flexibility between the different Funds over the life of the initiative, or multi annual contracts within a national programme or subsidy).

The programmes are implemented by a decision-making partnership at regional level (or at national level when this proves impossible at regional level), in which at least all the national contributors of part-finance (State, region, other local collective bodies) are represented.

The individual selection of the projects and beneficiaries and the financial and administrative management of the regional Leader programme falls within the exclusive competence of these partners, who must, however, act in compliance with Community policies, criteria for the eligibility of measures under the Structural Funds and permissible rates of assistance. In accordance with the administrative rules of the Member States, reasons shall be given for any refusal of assistance. The selection shall be carried out having regard to the opinion of the other rural operators concerned, whether these are professional bodies, associations or local authorities, where they do not form part of the decision-making partnership. However, where the decision-making partnership fails properly to fulfil its functions, the Commission, in agreement with the Member State, shall endeavour to define other procedures, including the possibility of intervening in the selection process.

The programme submitted to the Commission must specify how the partnerships operate, as well as the procedures for submission of projects by local groups and other collective bodies.

These programmes will be concluded for the entire programme period (1994-1999) so as to ensure that they last as long as the needs of rural development and all the final beneficiaries (local action groups or other collective bodies) require, but must contain a clause allowing for a mid-term review in order to ensure that available funds are used to the best possible effect.

VI. MONITORING — CONTROL — ASSESSMENT

17. *Monitoring*

Unless other arrangements are agreed through the partnership, each programme or global grant shall come under the regional (or national) Monitoring Committee for Objective 1 or 5(b) which has technical or territorial responsibility so as to ensure that each programme or global grant is as complementary as possible to the rural development operational programmes under the Community Support Frameworks (or Single Programming Document).

Moreover, experience acquired under Leader I and the fact that projects are intended to serve as models both indicate that regional and national levels should be coordinated in order to provide physical and financial monitoring on the basis of which an assessment of the initiative as a whole at the level of each Member State can be carried out. The partnership should enable the most appropriate administrative arrangements to be identified, taking into account the institutional arrangements in each Member State. Taking account of the specific objectives of Leader II (support and diffusion of innovation), national coordination and the Monitoring Committee, in which the Commission will participate, constitute the first level where the exchange of experience will operate. To this end these bodies will be informed *a posteriori* of the final beneficiaries (local groups and other collective bodies) selected by the managers of each programme.

18. *Control*

All the provisions of Article 23 of Regulation (EEC) No 4253/88, as amended by Regulation (EEC) No 2082/93 apply, and the Member State will guarantee all the operations.

Since the initiative's management is to be decentralized, the Member State's description of the management and verification systems it intends to establish to ensure that the measures are effectively implemented should be attached to the Leader II proposals and will be considered together with the regional programmes.

19. *Assessment*

Since the initiative's management is to be decentralized, and the emphasis is on innovation and the model function, continuous assessment of Leader II is essential.

To qualify for implementation, each regional programme will have to include, before it starts up, a mechanism for continuous assessment of the different projects and of the programme as a whole. Details of the operation of this mechanism will be attached to the programme submitted to the Commission. The partners responsible for the programme will have to arrange for regular assessment reports to be submitted to the Monitoring Committee and the Commission. All the data gathered will also be submitted for use by the innovation Observatory.

Each beneficiary of the programme (local group or other collective body) will have to provide, in a form to be defined, information for assessment purposes, permitting an initial analysis, specification of the changes expected, the extent of the innovation and the model function of the project. This information will serve as a reference point for assessment to analyse over the duration of each project the emergence of the innovation in question, its impact, its spontaneous spread and the conditions for any transfer.

More generally, the periodic assessment must show the value added by the different categories of the programme in relation to other measures in the same area (including transnational cooperation projects).

The network will collect all these assessments and reports and redistribute them in the form of bulletins on innovative practices and papers synthesizing information on particular aspects.

This permanent assessment will enable the regional decision-making partnership to refine its internal selection criteria, adjust its strategy and propose any modifications to its programme.

Leader II will also be assessed (mid-term and at the end of the programme period) in terms of its impact at the national and Community levels. This statutory assessment will be carried out within the partnership as for all programmes part-financed by the Structural Funds. It will use specific parameters adapted to the programme's characteristics.

VII. COMMUNITY FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION: LEADER II

20. The Leader II initiative will be jointly financed by the Member State and the Community. The total Structural Funds contribution to Leader for the period from 1994 to 1999 is estimated at ECU 1 400 million in 1994 prices, of which ECU 900 million is for the Objective 1 regions.

21. Community contribution rates will be applied as defined in the Structural Funds Regulations will apply. Within the ceilings fixed by the Regulations measures (a) (skills acquisition) and (c) (transnational cooperation) may be granted higher rates depending on details to be worked out in the partnership.

22. An indicative amount of not more than 2,5 % of the total Community contribution will be reserved to finance the various activities of the Community network (including the Observatory of innovation and rural development) and any support of national networks (measure (d)).

VIII. APPLICATIONS FOR ASSISTANCE BY MEMBER STATES

23. The Member States should submit applications for assistance for the programmes or integrated global grants within four months from the date of publication of this notice in the Official Journal of the European Communities. Applications received after this date will be taken into account by the Commission of the European Communities only in exceptional and duly justified cases.

When an application is for areas that fall within the scope of more than one Objective (Objectives 1 and 5(b)), the expenditure for each Objective and area must be clearly distinguished.

24. Address for all correspondence regarding this notice:

Mr G. Legras,
Director-General,
Directorate-General for Agriculture,
Commission of the European Communities,
Rue de la Loi, 200,
B-1049 Brussels.

ANNEX I

LEADER II

Indicative list of eligible measures

Since it has limited funds at its disposal, Leader II will give priority to innovative measures to develop the locally-generated potential of rural areas. Therefore, with the exception of very small-scale measures, to be defined in the partnership, investments in infrastructure are not eligible under this initiative, nor is any single productive investment entailing an amount exceeding a ceiling to be agreed in the partnership.

1. Measure a): acquisition of skills

- Analysis of the local area.
- Informing the population about Leader.
- Technical support for the formation of local partnerships.
- Technical support for drawing up of local integrated development strategies.
- Technical support for potential beneficiaries (local groups and other collective bodies) in seeking financing and preparing applications.

2. Measure b): rural innovation programmes (local groups and other collective bodies)

Projects must include elements of innovation and elements that are capable of functioning as a model to be assessed in the light of the area's characteristics and the content of the operational programme under the Community support framework for that area (*cf.* par. 11 of the notice).

Local groups that have benefited from Leader I will be treated on a strictly equal footing and their projects will be subject to the same criteria as those of other potential beneficiaries.

In the case of local groups (public and private partners cooperating on a multisectorial development strategy in a local-scale continuous area), the project submitted must include several of the elements listed below. In the case of other collective bodies, whether public or private, the local project may be limited to a single operational aspect.

Technical support for rural development

- Technical assistance for those running development projects (identification of initiatives involving starting up or taking over businesses, including farms, feasibility studies, technical advice, follow-up, etc.).
- Technical assistance for existing small firms and other activities (farming, crafts, etc.) (identification of potential markets, access to finance, innovation management, etc.).
- Single offices providing guidance, advice and support for young people who wish to go into business.
- Raising the awareness of the public, including young people still at school, about the area's identity and prospects and the need for innovation.
- Operational expenditure (management and organization of the project).
- Aid for data processing and transmission equipment needed by a local groups or other collective bodies to implement the project (maximum 3 % of total cost of project).

Training and recruitment assistance

- Training of project managers and organizers.
- Short training courses for specific requirements related to the implementation of other project measures that are not financed under the CSF operational programme.
- Development training.

- Involvement of educational and training institutions in the development process.
- Innovative procedures for the integration of people into working life whose employment situation is unstable (training companies and workshops, public service jobs, etc.).

Rural tourism

- Individual or collective small-scale innovative investment projects (including tourist investment linked to farming).
- Investments in small-scale public infrastructure to meet new requirements relating to tourist facilities.
- Listing, restoration and development of rural historic buildings and sites of tourist interest.
- Promotional activities, market studies, introduction of reservation systems.
- Devising and establishing new rural tourism products (including cultural tourism and back-to-nature holidays).

Small firms, craft enterprises and local services

- Access by small firms and craft enterprises (particularly in the agri-foodstuff sector, including processing of fisheries products) to services (advisory, market studies, transfer of technology, innovation, vocational training).
- Establishment (start-up aid) of local services needed in an area, including those providing additional work for farmers (information, unified provision of services, call-out transport, etc.).
- Aid for innovative investment in crafts enterprises and small firms, in particular to take advantage of local natural resources.
- Facilitation of tele-working.
- Aid for setting up businesses.

Local exploitation and marketing of agricultural, forestry and fisheries products

- Local and regional market studies and analysis of distribution channels.
- Technical assistance and investment for the production of local specialities derived from agricultural, forestry and fisheries.
- Transfer of technologies.
- Promotion and labelling of local and regional quality products stressing their local origin.
- Marketing (sales structure, participation in fairs, contacts with mail order and central purchasing organizations, tele-marketing).
- Diversification of agricultural production and farmers' activities.
- Development of aquaculture and non-commercial sports fishing.
- Production of alternative and renewable sources of energy (exploitation of biomass and of waste from the wood industry).
- Development of financial engineering.

N.B.: Should the case arise, measures in the fisheries sector must be different from those financed under the Community Initiative programme in the same area.

Preservation and improvement of the environment and living conditions

- Renovation and development of villages and the existing architectural heritage.
- Support for cultural creativity and the promotion of cultural products linked with rural development.
- Protection, rehabilitation and exploitation of natural resources (fauna, flora, small streams etc.) and landscapes.
- Disposal and recycling of waste, including use for energy production.

3. Measure c): transnational cooperation

- Costs of participation in activities of the European rural development network (identification of potential partners, setting up cooperation projects).
- Eligible cooperation measures are identical to those under point 2 (reminder: the innovation criterion does not apply to this category).

ANNEX II

LEADER II

Outline application for assistance

(Integrated operational programme or integrated global grant)

1. PROGRAMME

- 1.1. Brief analysis of area concerned.
- 1.2. Strategy for Leader II in the area covered by the programme.
- 1.3. Complementarity with operations financed under the Community Support Framework and new aspects not included in CSF operations.
- 1.4. Procedures for informing potential beneficiaries
- 1.5. Financing plan by year, measure and Fund.
- 1.6. **Measure a) - Acquiring skills**
 - Objective.
 - Summary of applications already submitted (to serve as examples) and types of measure eligible (for the purposes of Annex I).
 - Nature of beneficiaries (local collective bodies, associations, local population).
Note: beneficiaries of this measure are not automatically beneficiaries of measures b) or c). Assistance is intended to precede any investment programmes.
 - Selection procedures and criteria.
 - Authority responsible for implementation.
 - Indicative timetable.
- 1.7. **Measure b) - Rural innovation programmes - local development groups**
 - Objectives.
 - Strategy.
 - Expected impact on the reference situation.
 - Complementarity with operations financed under the Community Support Framework and new aspects not included in CSF operations.
 - Summary of applications already submitted (to serve as examples) and types of measure eligible (for the purposes of Annex I).
 - Nature of beneficiaries.
 - Selection procedures and criteria.
 - Management procedures (nature of multiannual contracts with beneficiaries, degree of autonomy of groups).
 - Authority responsible for implementation.

- Indicative timetable and indication of procedure planned for ensuring regular surveys of projects of new beneficiaries for the duration of the initiative.
 - Financing plan by Fund.
- 1.8. Measure b) — Rural innovation programmes — other collective bodies
- Same information as under 1.7.
 - Priority aspects or sectors if any.
 - Selection criteria should make it possible to ensure that the measure fits into the overall rural development plan at the local level.
- 1.9. Measure c) — Transnational cooperation
- Same information as for 1.7 and 1.8.
 - If this is not available, indicate the amount of the Leader budget set aside for this purpose; the specification must be submitted subsequently to the Monitoring Committee.
 - Planned preparatory measures (identification and linking up of partners).
- 1.10. Monitoring and continuous assessment
- Specific monitoring procedures established at regional (national) level, taking into account the very decentralized nature of the initiative.
 - Description of the mechanism for assessing the various projects and the programme as a whole.
 - Timetable and procedures for selecting the body responsible for this assessment.
 - Estimated cost of assessment, to be funded from the Leader grant (maximum 1 % of the programme).
2. PARTNERSHIP
- Composition of planning and decision-making partnership.
 - Composition of local and regional advisory or associated partnership.
 - Unless otherwise agreed with the Member State, opinion of the advisory partnership.
 - Procedures for decisions and selection of final beneficiaries by the partnership.
3. PARTICIPATION IN THE EUROPEAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK
- Planned arrangements for ensuring participation in the network by partners and final beneficiaries (local groups and other collective bodies).
 - Planned measures for disseminating results and assessments through the network.
 - Specific contribution of rural development know-how which the partners presenting the programme are prepared to make available to all Community rural areas.
4. PART-FINANCING — CONTROL
- Undertaking by those providing national part-finance to do so in respect of the programme and assurance that budgets will be available for this purpose for the entire programme period.
 - Financial control procedures.
-

NOTICE TO THE MEMBER STATES

laying down guidelines for operational programmes which Member States are invited to establish in the framework of a Community initiative concerning the most remote regions

(REGIS II)

(94/C 180/11)

1. At its meeting on 15 June 1994, the Commission of the European Communities decided to establish a Community initiative concerning the most remote regions as defined in Declaration No 26 annexed to the Treaty on European Union (hereinafter referred to as 'Regis II'—initiative pour régions isolées—initiative for the most remote regions) within the meaning of Article 11 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 4253/88, as amended by Regulation (EEC) No 2082/93⁽¹⁾. This initiative is a continuation of the Regis initiative⁽²⁾, which was adopted in July 1992 and came to an end on 31 December 1993.

2. Community assistance in the form of loans and grants may be provided under Regis to the regions of Guadeloupe, French Guyana, Martinique, Réunion, Canary Islands, the Azores and Madeira to finance operational programmes submitted by the Member States and approved by the Commission of the European Communities. These regions were selected on account of their great distance from the rest of the Community, their economic dependence, in most cases, on tropical agriculture, and their proximity to non-member countries which are party to preferential agreements with the Community.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No L 193, 31. 7. 1993, p. 24.

⁽²⁾ OJ No C 196, 4. 8. 1990, p. 15.

I. OBJECTIVES

3. The reason for the initiative is the need to undertake development measures complementary to those agreed under the Community Support Frameworks (CSFs) to speed up adaptation of the economies of the recipient regions so that they may be better integrated into the European Community's internal market. The initiative forms part of the Community's policy towards its most remote regions.

4. The specific objectives of Regis are:

- to promote economic diversification;
- to consolidate the links between these regions and the rest of the European Community;
- to stimulate cooperation between neighbouring remote regions, and between them and nearby non-member countries, particularly those party to preferential arrangements with the Community;
- where appropriate, to increase their capacity to cope with natural disasters.

5. Under this initiative, the most remote regions may participate fully in measures under other initiatives, and in particular transnational cooperation networks. Measures under the Regis Community initiative which relate to a specific initiative will be implemented in full compliance with the provisions laid down in that initiative. In addition, in duly justified cases, the most remote regions could participate in other Community initiatives. Such participation will not entail an increase in the amounts allocated to the Member States directly concerned by the initiatives.

6. In drawing up operational programmes, priority should be given to economic diversification by developing products and services for the local markets, for the markets of neighbouring non-member countries and for the Community market. Particular attention should also be paid to vocational training measures, and in particular those concerning young people and women, and to local and rural development measures.

II. ELIGIBLE MEASURES

7. In this section a list of eligible measures is proposed. In submitting operational programmes, the Member States may choose a more limited, but balanced, set of measures on which Community aid will be concentrated.

8. In order to encourage economic diversification, the following measures are eligible:

- a) Agriculture and rural development: assistance for the diversification of agricultural production in order to increase self-sufficiency and develop products for export. This may involve the financing of investments in farming, packaging and processing, marketing schemes, the organization of agricultural producers and measures to improve the genetic quality and health of livestock. Similar assistance to upgrade traditional agricultural activities can be granted provided that economic viability in the medium-term can be demonstrated. Measures under the Community initiative for local development in rural areas (Leader II) are also eligible under this heading.
- b) Tourism: assistance for investment related to the development of adventure holidays outside the main tourist centres which takes account of the local context and does not endanger environmentally sensitive zones (e.g. rural accommodation, family-run hotels, tourist facilities linked to the creation or development of national parks, forest and tropical river trails, hiking paths, development of the architectural heritage and local cultural assets).
- c) Industry and services: measures concerning the modernization and diversification of small and medium-sized firms.
- d) Energy: assistance for investments in energy saving, production and local energy sources, with particular emphasis on renewable energies, including geothermal energy.

- e) Environment: measures to preserve the natural beauty of areas of tourist importance and investment in the treatment of waste water, urban waste and industrial and toxic waste.
- f) Fisheries: measures under the Pesca initiative.

9. In order to consolidate the links between these regions and the rest of the Community, the following measures will be eligible:

- a) investment in transport and telecommunications infrastructures and services, both over long distances and between neighbouring regions;
- b) measures to exchange and transfer know-how from other Community regions through, for example, study visits, seminars, training courses and participation in networks; product promotion campaigns to secure outlets throughout the Community market.

10. The following measures will be eligible in the context of cooperation between the most remote regions and with neighbouring countries, particularly countries party to the Fourth ACP-EEC Convention:

- a) assistance for organizing seminars, meetings, missions and studies and for setting up agencies through which to find potential partners and to define and implement joint cooperation measures;
- b) assistance for setting up services and purchasing equipment required for other joint initiatives, particularly in the fields of tourism and trade;
- c) assistance for the purchase of equipment and the construction of buildings needed for the development and improvement of services at the disposal of a geographical area extending beyond the Community regions and assistance with the costs of setting up bodies to develop services for the export of local know-how;
- d) assistance for small inter-regional transport infrastructures.

11. Assistance to cover the additional costs of business investments resulting from the need to take account of natural hazards, for example, assistance for improving security and protecting the energy distribution network in areas with tropical weather conditions. Such additional costs will be calculated on the basis of criteria agreed jointly with the Commission of the European Communities.

12. Measures concerning vocational training and employment linked with the foregoing measures are eligible. These will include:

- aid for the setting up of self-employed businesses and for recruitment to newly created stable jobs;
- vocational training in management and marketing, new technologies, renewable energy and energy control, tourism, environmental management and language training;
- vocational training in reducing the risks resulting from hurricanes, particularly for the agricultural sector;
- in view of the extent of unemployment or under-employment, it is also intended to provide assistance to social policies which help young people and the long-term unemployed to find employment and help the under-employed to be more fully employed.

Measures under the Emploi and Adapt initiatives are also eligible.

III. THE COMMUNITY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE FINANCING OF REGIS

13. The Regis operational programmes will be jointly financed by the Member State and the Community. The total contribution by the Structural Funds to Regis for the period 1994-1999 is estimated at ECU 600 million. Loans may also be made by the European Investment Bank.

14. The Community contribution to the operational programmes will take account of the quality of the programmes and the remoteness of the regions, their population, their level of economic development and their specific handicaps.

In evaluating the quality of the programmes, the Commission will take into account the following elements in particular:

- specific objectives for medium-term economic diversification, and the mechanisms for achieving them;
- the expected impact of the proposed measures on economic and social development;
- an exact timetable giving milestones at which an evaluation of the impact on economic development will be made, and the methods of monitoring and assessment to be used;
- the involvement of regional and local authorities and the social partners in the preparation of the CIPs and their implementation in a way appropriate to each Member State;
- a demonstration of the additional character of the resources requested from the Community as well as those made available by the regional and national authorities in support of the operational programme;
- the appropriate use of loans and grants.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

15. Member States should submit detailed proposals for operational programmes or global grants within four months of the date of publication of this notice in the Official Journal of the European Communities. The Commission need not take account of proposals received after that date.

16. Community assistance may be granted to public bodies or, in the form of global grants, direct to the bodies responsible for implementation as designated by the Member State concerned, including bodies responsible for transnational measures which entail expenditure in more than one Member State.

17. Cooperation between beneficiaries will be encouraged both within the Member States concerned and between regions in different countries to enhance exchanges of experience, the spreading of best practice, joint measures and comparative assessments. The Commission will encourage the Member States to take this objective into account in preparing and subsequently managing the programme.

The proposals must include an appreciation of the situation indicating the objectives to be attained and should include a timetable, criteria and procedures for implementation, monitoring and assessment. During and at the end of the planning period the Commission shall evaluate, in partnership with the Member States, the results of the programmes submitted. The European Parliament, the Management Committee on the Community initiatives and the monitoring committees shall be informed of the results of such evaluations and the action taken in response to them.

18. All correspondence relating to this notice should be addressed to:

Mr E. Landaburu,
Director-General,
Directorate-General for Regional Policy,
Commission of the European Communities,
Rue de la Loi, 200,
B-1049 Brussels.

COMMUNICATION TO THE MEMBER STATES

laying down guidelines for operational programmes or global grants which Member States are invited to propose within the framework of a Community initiative on Employment and Development of Human Resources aimed at promoting employment growth mainly through the development of human resources

(94/C 180/10)

1. At its meeting of 15 June 1994 the Commission of the European Communities decided to introduce a framework initiative on 'Employment and Development of Human Resources' in the context of Article 11 of the Council Regulation (EEC) No 4253/88 as modified by the Council Regulation (EEC) No 2082/93.

2. Within the framework of this initiative the Community may grant subsidies for measures which satisfy the guidelines laid down in this communication and which are included in proposals for operational programmes or global grant submitted by the Member States and approved by the European Commission. In addition, other Community financial instruments may make an appropriate contribution to this initiative.

I. OBJECTIVES

3. This initiative aims to contribute to the development of human resources and to improve the workings of the labour market with a view to enhancing employment growth, to promoting social solidarity in the European Union and to promoting equal opportunities for women on the labour market. As such it is a direct follow-up to the Commission's White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment, the main thrust of which is to put the highest possible premium on pro-active labour market measures to stimulate employment-intensive growth.

4. The initiative has three inter-related objectives corresponding to three distinct but inter-connected strands:

- a) to promote equal employment opportunities for women, in particular with regard to training measures, access to future-oriented occupations and to management positions ('Employment-NOW');
- b) to improve the employment prospects of the disabled, and other disadvantaged groups ('Employment-HORIZON');
- c) to promote labour market integration of young people, in particular those without basic qualifications or training ('Employment-YOUTHSTART').

5. Positive benefits will accrue right across the initiative from the active crossfertilisation of ideas and experiences promoted within each strand. A coordinated response is called for in submitting requests for support under this initiative. Member States should ensure that the overall package of proposals is a well-balanced set of measures related to each of the strands of the initiative. The proposals should also ensure coherence of action between the three strands.

The Commission, in partnership with Member States, will aim to ensure complementarity between measures assisted under this initiative and those supported under other Community programmes, in particular in the field of vocational training.

II. PRIORITIES

6. Over and above the measures taken by Member States themselves and the other activities supported by the European Social Fund, this initiative is intended to serve as a catalyst for Community-wide innovation as well as for the organised transfer of expertise and the dissemination of good practice between Member States.

In order to achieve higher added value for the Community, Member States' proposals should, in particular:

- a) demonstrate an overall transnational dimension, giving priority to transnational exchange, cooperation and dissemination of information, in particular involving partners in Objective 1 regions;
- b) consist of measures and actions which are innovative;
- c) give priority to improving the efficiency of training and employment systems and services and the promotion of transparency of qualifications;
- d) encourage a more active and co-ordinated approach at local level to obtain a greater employment impact by involving in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the measures all relevant actors designated by the Member States, including local and regional authorities, economic and Social Partners and voluntary bodies;
- e) reinforce Community policies as well as Community programmes especially in the field of human resources and labour market integration;
- f) provide for the necessary flexibility to accommodate needs which cannot be foreseen at the first planning stage, and which call for a special effort from the Community.

III. REGIONAL ELIGIBILITY AND CONCENTRATION

7. This initiative is applicable to the whole of the territory of the Union. However, particular emphasis will to be placed on the needs of the less favoured regions. A number of measures will therefore apply only to priority regions (Objectives 1, 2 and 5b).

IV. ELIGIBLE MEASURES

8. The list of measures which follows presents all eligible measures which may be financed under this initiative. When preparing their proposals for Operational Programmes or for global grants, Member States are invited to select, in cooperation with the Commission, a more limited list of measures per strand on which to concentrate financial assistance.

9. *'Employment-NOW' (equal employment opportunities for women).*

This strand aims to help to reduce unemployment among women and to improve the position of those already in the workforce, through the promotion of equal employment opportunities. It will support the development of innovative strategies to respond to changes in the organisation of work and changing job requirements.

The transnational dimension of the initiative will permit a comparison of different experiences, as well as the transfer of know-how and experience and cooperation. It will also reinforce the development of innovative actions in favour of women, especially in Objective 1 areas and in sectors where such actions are at present less developed. To ensure a maximum multiplier effect, particular attention will be given to the development of the training of trainers as well as the structure of training programmes, methodologies and tools.

The first NOW Initiative demonstrated the need to develop strong and active partnerships at local, national and transnational level. These should involve enterprises, public and private bodies responsible for training and employment, bodies responsible for equality issues, regional and local authorities, non-governmental organisations and women's organisations, in such a way that best practice is gradually taken up and incorporated into mainstream training and employment systems. Priority should be given to actions in which Social Partners and women's organizations are actively involved at all levels.

Within this strand the following measures will be eligible for assistance:

- a) *the development, in particular through transnational cooperation, of appropriate training guidance, counselling and employment systems including:*
 - development of cooperation and networking between training bodies in order to promote equality of opportunities for women in the labour market, with particular emphasis on improving access to and promoting women's progress in, rapidly developing sectors and new areas of work, and to their access to management responsibilities;

- the strengthening of links between training bodies, higher educational establishments and enterprises to improve the professional integration of women (Objective 1 regions only);
 - support to educational establishments for the development of innovatory educational material which improves equality of opportunity for women in the labour market (Objective 1 regions only);
 - support for the creation or development of guidance/counselling and pre-training services for women;
 - support for the creation or development at local level of advisory services to facilitate the start-up of SMEs and cooperatives;
 - support for the creation or development of relevant care services infrastructure, where they are less developed (Objective 1 regions only);
- b) *the delivery, in particular on a transnational basis, of training, including:*
- the provision of a comprehensive package of flexible training and other accompanying measures, including information, guidance, counselling, pre-training, personal development, upgrading of basic skills and qualifying training, re-training, job-search assistance, business traineeships and in-job support. Particular attention should be given to new job requirements, new qualifications and skills, notably in the area of RTD and innovative technologies;
 - vocational training measures, including preparatory training, geared specifically to the needs of running businesses or cooperatives;
 - training for trainers, for those responsible for personnel or for negotiating training matters within enterprises, in order to make them more aware of and active in equality issues;
 - training in equality of opportunities for those responsible for personnel in the public sector, for educational personnel and for equality advisors in educational establishments (Objective 1 regions only);
 - the development of innovatory assessment methods to integrate within career structures all the experiences and activities carried out by women, including those that are not formally recognised, in order to promote accreditation of prior learning;
 - initial and continuing training especially in SMEs and in sectors subject to industrial change, to adapt the female workforce to the changing labour market and to improve their career development;
 - initial and continuing training for appropriate care services personnel with a view to improving the quality of these services.
- c) *job creation and support, particularly through transnational cooperation, for the start up of small businesses and cooperatives by women, including:*
- development of networking and cooperation on local employment initiatives, aimed at mobilising the capacities of women to build on local resources, in particular in areas such as tourism, culture, environment, care and for job creation in rural areas;
 - aid for the creation of self-employed activities, small enterprises and cooperatives including recruitment aid;
 - aid for the setting up of financial support instruments for enterprise creation by women;

Within the framework of measures provided under a), b) and c), the Commission will support the operating costs of care services for dependants in order to facilitate participation in training and employment of women with children and/or other dependants.

d) *information dissemination and awareness actions, particularly through transnational cooperation, including:*

- measures directed in particular at the Social Partners, personnel of education, training and employment services, local and regional authorities and the general public to heighten awareness about the need to act in favour of equal opportunities between men and women in the labour market;
- the setting-up of networks, creation or improvement of data bases and the carrying out of studies linked with the objectives of this strand and the dissemination of the results of best practice;
- gender-related monitoring and assessment of vocational training and employment actions.

10. *'Employment-HORIZON' (improving the employment prospects of the disabled and other disadvantaged groups).*

This strand will promote, with an important emphasis on the transnational dimension, measures to improve access to the labour market for those who find themselves excluded from it or those at the risk of being excluded. It is aimed at those people who are not merely unemployed but who face severe obstacles to their integration due to the degree of their marginalisation. This group includes, on the one hand, the disabled, and, on the other hand, the disadvantaged, in particular, people at high-risk, including drug addicts and marginalized persons, immigrants, refugees, itinerants, isolated people, single-parent families, the homeless, prisoners and ex-prisoners. Increasingly some of the long-term unemployed will also fall into this group. Priority under this strand must be given to actions in favour of disabled people in particular with regard to the level of funding.

Overcoming the problems of these groups has to be tackled through two main types of action. The first is the improvement of the quality of training especially the development of new employment skills and qualifications. The second includes job creation actions, in particular through new forms of work organisation, through employment aids and support for work in the open labour market and through developments in relation to sheltered employment. Emphasis should be placed on a bottom-up approach.

The strand will reinforce in particular measures under Objective 3 of the Structural Funds to facilitate the occupational integration of those exposed to exclusion from the labour market. There will be a particular focus on the disabled and other disadvantaged groups. It will also draw on the previous experiences of relevant Community programmes and particularly on the lessons of the first Horizon programme.

The partners involved at national and transnational level will include enterprises, public and private bodies responsible for training and employment, universities and research institutes, regional and local authorities, and non-governmental organisations. Priority should be given to actions in which the Social Partners are actively involved at all levels.

Within the scope of this strand, the following measures will be eligible for assistance;

a) *the development, in particular through transnational cooperation, of appropriate training, guidance, counselling and employment systems, including:*

- support for the creation or development of tailored advisory services and local development agencies to help to create jobs for disabled and disadvantaged people particularly in the sectors where potential employment growth appears high, (Objective 1, 2 and 5b only);
- the adaptation of the work place, in particular through the introduction of new technologies, and the development of conditions for distance work;
- support for the implementation of flexible training and learning systems such as distance and interactive computer learning;

- the improvement of access to training and work-related services through the adaptation of buildings and transport systems, (Objective 1 regions only);
 - the occupational integration of disadvantaged people within urban communities with the help of community infrastructure, information, advice and development of services, (Objective 1, 2 and 5b regions only);
 - setting up reception/guidance and employment centres, including places of transit, for multiple use, for the initial integration of refugees, (Objective 1 regions only);
- b) *the delivery, in particular through transnational cooperation, of training, including:*
- training for qualifications and skills related to the use by disabled people of technologies in the work or training place;
 - training of disabled and disadvantaged people, in new skills and qualifications especially for sectors where employment growth appears high and in the areas of RTD and innovative technologies;
 - training of disabled and disadvantaged people (functional, psychological and social rehabilitation, pre-training, upgrading of basic skills, retraining) preceded and accompanied by on-going assessment and counselling. This will include *inter alia* 'on the job' training modules linked to special courses for specific target groups to improve integration into the labour market;
 - training schemes for experts and for human resources personnel in the field of reorganisation of work and adaptation of the workplace;
 - training or upgrading of skills and qualifications of advisers, local development agents, trainers, social workers, representatives of the Social Partners and those responsible for personnel in the private sector in order to improve their understanding and awareness in matters concerning the integration of the disabled and disadvantaged and into sectors where employment growth appears high;
- c) *job creation and support, particularly on a transnational basis, for the start-up of enterprises cooperatives and public-private partnerships, including:*
- job creation measures designed to exploit local potential for developing new types of employment based on innovative approaches to work organisation. Introduction of such approaches into enterprises in order to prevent job loss of disabled workers;
 - innovative approaches to reducing the labour costs for employers of groups with lower productivity in the labour market;
 - development of supported employment places and new employment schemes (through, for example, sheltered employment and cooperatives);
 - job creation actions to facilitate integration into the labour market and to offset possible loss of benefits in the transition from a protected environment;
 - support to local employment initiatives including public-private partnerships and involving local communities in particular in sectors where employment intensive growth appears high.
- d) *information dissemination and awareness actions, including:*
- support for wide dissemination of information on employment and training opportunities in a format accessible to disabled and disadvantaged groups;
 - actions to raise the awareness of the general public, the Social Partners and education, training and employment services personnel with regard to the employment potential

11. *'Employment-YOUTHSTART' (promoting labour market integration of young people).*

One of the main conclusions of the White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment is that more effort is required to enable young people to participate effectively in the labour market. Young people who have left education without qualification face particular problems of integration. They often cannot compete effectively in an already difficult labour market, and they face the danger of long-term unemployment and potential alienation from society.

In order to address this fundamental problem the Commission proposed in its White Paper, endorsed by the Heads of State and Government in December, a scheme called YOUTHSTART. The aim of the scheme is to stimulate actions by Member States leading progressively in the longer term to the provision of a youth guarantee throughout the Union. The idea is that every young person under the age of 20 would eventually be guaranteed access either to full-time employment or to a recognized form of education or training, including apprenticeship or other forms of linked work and training. Special efforts would be targeted at young people leaving school with no diploma or basic qualifications. As far as possible, work experience would be industry or service based. However, the huge scope for employment in the fields of environment, urban regeneration and the care sector would also be exploited. YOUTHSTART would guarantee each of its citizens a stake in the development of the Union. At the same time it would guarantee the Union the development of its greatest resource, namely its young people who all too often and all too quickly can drift into unemployment, often long-term, and eventually exclusion.

The basis of YOUTHSTART would be 12 national programmes tailored to the requirements of each Member State receiving where appropriate support through the Community Support Frameworks. More limited but carefully targeted resources will be channelled through Employment-YOUTHSTART mainly for pilot actions. Employment-YOUTHSTART will act as a catalyst for the scheme as a whole. The scheme has as its long term objective the progressive introduction of measures to ensure that all young people have access either to fulltime employment or to a recognized form of education or training. Employment-YOUTHSTART will ensure the development of the innovative and transnational dimension of YOUTHSTART. It will assert the development of structured networks of projects and programmes in order to ensure the exchange of good practice and experience. In exceptional and duly justified circumstances, Member States may include young persons over the age of 20 within the framework of Employment-YOUTHSTART.

To maximize the value of YOUTHSTART, it will be linked to the establishment of agreed standards and targets. These standards and targets, to which the initiative would make an essential contribution, would include: a coherent link with the labour market; minimum training/qualification standards; independent counselling; adequate postactivity placement; remuneration; a full range of 'soft infrastructure' support (childcare, literacy etc); role of social security and planned, structured transnational exchange opportunities.

Within this strand of the initiative the following measures, designed to complement the introduction or development of appropriate measures within national programmes, will be eligible for assistance:

- a) *the development, in the context of assuring the necessary complementarity with other related actions of the ESF and those supported under the Leonardo programme and in particular on a transnational basis, of appropriate training guidance, counselling and employment systems, in the public and private sectors as appropriate, including:*
 - the setting of targets and standards in regard to careers guidance, pre-training, vocational training, apprenticeships, placement activity, supporting measures and evaluation;
 - identification, adaptation and transfer of existing good practice models relating to labour market integration of young people;
 - the conception, development and delivery of innovatory approaches to labour market integration of young people especially through distance learning;

- facilitating a more active interaction between education, vocational training and the labour market to enhance job opportunities generally.
- b) *the provision, where appropriate on a transnational basis, mainly by building on pilot actions and experience gained in related Community programmes, especially under the proposed Leonardo programme, of training and placement, including:*
 - structured training and placement programmes for young people, with a particular emphasis on enhancing and reinforcing vocational, personal, entrepreneurial and linguistic skills, to be co-ordinated effectively with local programmed training and placement activity;
 - the training of trainers and placement personnel particularly those designing and delivering services at local level, in order to improve labour market integration of young people;
 - facilitating special training and placement experience, particularly in the fields of the arts, cultural heritage, environmental protection, urban regeneration and care services;
 - the application of innovatory models which can support and enhance local activity.
- c) *assisting job creation, in particular through transnational cooperation, including:*
 - measures aimed at young people wishing to become self employed with particular emphasis on developing relationships with young entrepreneurs in other Member States, transnational trading agencies, and self help networks;
 - transnational exchanges between local development agencies in order to identify and apply innovative support and development models;
 - support for local employment initiatives aimed at the integration of young people, particularly in the fields of the arts, cultural heritage, environmental protection, urban regeneration and the care sector;
- d) *information dissemination and awareness actions, in particular on a transnational basis, including:*
 - measures aimed at raising awareness, especially among the Social Partners and of agencies concerned, of the particular integration problems facing young people and of possible responses;
 - support for related information services at national, regional and local level;
 - information activities aimed at promoting the Employment-YOUTHSTART programme among young people.

V. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

12. Technical assistance will be available at the initiative of the Member States or of the Commission and will be supported during both the stage of preparation of proposals and the subsequent stage of implementation. Technical assistance may include:
- the dissemination of information and other awareness actions;
 - the provision of consultancy and expert services;
 - the organisation of bilateral or multilateral meetings between Member States to facilitate cooperation;
 - the development and sharing of databases on training and employment services and other aspects of labour market organisation;
 - the carrying out of studies regarding innovative methods and the results of training, training of trainers and vocational guidance activities;
 - assistance on evaluation procedures and practices;
 - the creation or development of Community-wide networks to facilitate innovation and transnational cooperation.

A coordinated and coherent approach in regard to related Community action programmes should be ensured in particular for databases, networks and information dissemination. When the Commission proposes to launch a specific network, it will inform the Member States in due time.

VI. COMMUNITY FINANCING

13. The actions covered by this initiative shall be jointly financed by the Member States, the Community and by enterprises and other bodies where appropriate. Where employees of companies take part in the various operations, the enterprises concerned shall finance an appropriate part of their cost.

14. The total contribution from the Structural Funds for the period 1994-1999 is estimated at 1,4 billion ECU of which 0,8 billion ECU will be allocated to Objective 1 regions.

15. The distribution of resources between Member States under this initiative will be based on the relative severity of structural problems, including in particular relevant unemployment levels, as well as the quality of the proposals submitted for operational programmes and global grants.

16. Amounts will be allocated to each strand as follows:

'Employment-NOW':	370 MECU.
'Employment-HORIZON':	730 MECU.
'Employment-YOUTHSTART':	300 MECU.

In the adoption of the respective Operational Programmes, a corresponding balance between the strands should be reflected.

17. Rates of assistance will respect the provisions of the Structural Funds regulations. Under the Technical Assistance provisions, a maximum rate of assistance may be accorded for transnational actions.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION

18. Member States are invited to present proposals for support in the form of operational programmes or of global grants within four months of the date of publication of this communication. In the latter case, Community assistance may be granted directly to decentralised organisations responsible for implementation, including organisations responsible for managing transnational actions and designated by the Member State concerned.

19. As far as the most remote regions are concerned, the measures laid down in this initiative should, as a priority, be implemented in the framework and within the financial resources of the Community initiative Regis.

20. During the preparation of proposals, Member States are invited to discuss with the Commission the main priorities and eligible measures and the mechanisms of implementation.

21. Use can be made of the provisions for transnational operational programmes whereby two or more Member States may, on their own initiative or at the invitation of the Commission, present a single application for assistance. In response to these applications the Commission may, in consultation with the Member States concerned, take a single decision granting financial support.

22. Within the context of operational programmes or global grants measures should be identified by the main Objectives of the Structural Funds. The proposals must include a general appreciation of the situation indicating the objectives to be attained and should include a timetable, criteria and procedures for implementation, monitoring and assessment.

23. A single Monitoring Committee within each Member State will be responsible for the initiative as a whole.

24. It is proposed to develop special support structures under the various strands of the initiative. Cooperation with other Community action programmes concerned will also be reinforced in terms of guidelines, technical assistance, joint operations and networks, follow-up of projects, evaluation, research and dissemination of information. The national authorities concerned with this initiative will make reciprocal arrangements with those concerned with other related Community programmes to ensure that, in the selection of the projects, there is the maximum complementarity and minimum overlap between these programmes.

25. The Commission will require Member States to formulate and implement programmes so as to optimise the conditions for transnational cooperation.

VIII. EVALUATION

26. During and at the end of the planning period the Commission shall evaluate, in partnership with the Member States, the results of the programmes submitted. In order to carry out this evaluation the Commission will use the objectives specified by Member States according to the provisions laid down in part VII, point 22 as the main benchmark against which to assess progress. As a function of the desired objectives and the implemented measures this evaluation will provide data related to the target groups including the final beneficiaries. The European Parliament, the Management Committee on the Community Initiatives and the Committee referred to in part VII, point 23 of this communication shall be informed of the results of such evaluation measures and the action taken in response to them.

27. Correspondence concerning this communication should be sent to:

Mr. H.C. Jones,
Acting Director-General,
Directorate-General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs,
Commission of the European Communities,
Rue de la Loi, 200,
B-1049 Brussels.

COMMUNICATION TO THE MEMBER STATES

laying down guidelines for operational programmes or global grants which Member States are invited to propose within the framework of the Community initiative, Adaptation of the Workforce to Industrial Change (ADAPT), aimed at promoting employment and the adaptation of the workforce to industrial change

(94/C 180/09)

1. At its meeting of 15 June 1994 the Commission of the European Communities decided to introduce an initiative on 'Adaptation of the Workforce to Industrial Change (ADAPT)' in the context of Article 11 of the Council Regulation (EEC) No 4253/88 as modified by the Council Regulation (EEC) No 2082/93.

2. Within the framework of this initiative the Community may grant subsidies for measures which satisfy the guidelines laid down in this communication and which are included in proposals for operational programmes or global grants submitted by the Member States and approved by the European Commission. In addition, other Community financial instruments may make an appropriate contribution to this initiative.

I. OBJECTIVES

3. This initiative aims to contribute to the adaptation of the workforce to industrial change, and to improve the workings of the labour market with a view to growth, employment and the competitiveness of companies in the European Union. As such, it is a direct follow-up to the Commission's White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment presented to the European Council in December 1993.

4. The initiative has four inter-related objectives:

- a) to accelerate the adaptation of the workforce to industrial change;
- b) to increase the competitiveness of industry, services and commerce;
- c) to prevent unemployment by developing the workforce through improving qualifications and their internal and external flexibility and ensuring greater occupational mobility;
- d) to anticipate and accelerate the development of new jobs and new activities, particularly labour intensive ones; this includes exploiting the potential of SMEs.

5. Positive benefits will accrue right across the initiative from the active crossfertilisation of ideas and experiences. In submitting requests for support under this initiative Member States should ensure that the overall package of proposals contains a well-balanced set of actions related to each of the main categories of eligible measures listed in paragraph 7 of this Communication.

The Commission in partnership with Member States, will aim to ensure complementarity between measures assisted under this initiative and introduced under the Employment and Development of Human Resources initiative, the initiative for SMEs as well as those supported under other Community programmes, in particular in the field of vocational training and of equal opportunities for women.

II. PRIORITIES

6. Over and above the measures taken by Member States themselves and the other activities supported by the European Social Fund, this initiative is intended to serve as a catalyst for Community-wide innovation as well as for the organised transfer of expertise and the dissemination of good practice between Member States. Attention will be given to actions aiming at promoting equal opportunities for women.

In order to achieve higher added value for the Community, Member States' proposals should aim, in particular:

- a) to facilitate the adaptation of the workforce at risk through vocational training and retraining, guidance and counselling actions, especially for workers confronted with evolving job requirements related especially to changes in particular:
 - new technological production systems;
 - new production procedures;
 - management and organisation of work (strategies of total quality);
 - use of modern communication and information systems;
 - increasing of environmental requirements;
 - rational use of energy;
 - design of products;
 - changing in marketing strategies.
- b) to promote partnership and cooperation between research centres, enterprises training bodies and public authorities, in particular:
 - to stimulate enterprises to train their employees in order to allow for rapid application of research and development results which respond to the concrete needs of enterprises especially as regards the application of new technologies;
 - to improve the capacity of training providers to deliver the necessary training in this regard.
- c) to develop networks and cooperation between producers, suppliers and customers; this will involve both large companies and suppliers as well as SMEs, in order to stimulate the transfer of relevant know-how and good practice and to improve the ability of firms to train their workforce especially to meet the specific needs of SMEs.

In this context, a particular effort will be made:

- to ensure the essential synergy of interrelated business and training plans;
- to promote the development of competitive cluster activities and the participation of SMEs in enterprise networks.

To ensure the equal and full participation of both male and female employees in training, adequate child-care provision should be provided.

This list of priorities is not exhaustive and may need to be adapted in the light of the changing industrial situation.

III. ELIGIBLE MEASURES

7. The list of measures which follows presents all actions which may be financed under this initiative. When preparing their proposals for Operational Programmes or for global grants, Member States are invited to select, in cooperation with the Commission, a more limited list of measures on which to concentrate financial assistance.

The eligible measures should have some specific features:

- a) demonstrate an overall transnational dimension, giving priority to transnational exchange, cooperation and dissemination of information, involving partners in Objective 1 regions;
- b) be innovative;
- c) give priority to improving the efficiency of training and employment systems and services and the promotion of transparency of qualifications;

- d) encourage a more active and co-ordinated approach at local level to obtain a greater employment impact by involving in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the measures all relevant actors designated by the Member States, including local and regional authorities, economic and social partners and training bodies;
- e) reinforce Community policies as well as Community programmes especially in the field of employment, human resources and labour market integration;
- f) provide for the necessary flexibility to accommodate needs which cannot be foreseen at the first planning stage, and which call for a special effort from the Community.

The following measures will be eligible:

1) *Supply of Training, Counselling and Guidance, including:*

- support in the form of expertise for groups of firms designed to help them to identify the implications of changes to the industrial environment and to define and set up business plans and to implement the corresponding training plans and actions;
- support for the development and supply of training schemes related to new qualifications and skills of the workforce in firms concerned linked to change in production systems, by developing cooperation between training institutes, research centres, economic development agencies and firms;
- development and supply of guidance and counselling systems for workers affected by industrial change in different economic sectors, in particular those threatened by unemployment and those working within SMEs;
- assistance to SMEs for the setting-up and implementation of internal and external ongoing training programmes;
- training actions aimed at improving the capacity of entrepreneurs and managers to adapt to change and to design the relevant business plans; particular attention will need to be paid to improving management quality in SMEs.

2) *Anticipation, promotion of networking and new employment opportunities including:*

- anticipation of labour market trends and skill/qualification needs relating to the changing environment of industry and services through the creation or development at European level, of sectoral and regional networks set up to analyse trends in: markets, production systems, enterprise organization, industrial relations, employment and related qualifications and the local development support structures and services offered to firms; these networks should work in close association with the economic and social partners, training providers and employment services;
- encouragement for cooperation and training in new fields of economic activities with a view to the creation of new employment opportunities;
- support for local employment development initiatives including public-private partnerships to combine economic development strategies with training activities for the affected workforce.

3) *Adaptation of support structures and systems including:*

- promotion of cooperation and exchange between companies and research in the field of technology transfer to local labour markets and economic sectors most affected by change in employment and training to firms and vocational training bodies;

- support for the development of schemes for the training of trainers of adaptation of workers to industrial change and change in production systems outlined for this initiative;
- support to actions promoting regional, inter-regional and transnational cooperation between enterprises; in particular training for the setting up of shared service provision (e.g. research, design, marketing).

4) *Information, dissemination and awareness actions including:*

- development of databases on employment and adaptation actions geared towards the adaptation of workers to change, and interlinkage with databases on continuous training;
- promotion of the diffusion of best practice and exchange of experience based on an inter-regional and transnational approach stimulating the application of adequate training schemes and to enhance the multiplier effect;
- studies related to industrial change with particular reference to management, organisation, technological innovation, new production systems and procedures, communication and information systems, environmental factors and their impact on occupation and skill/qualifications of the workforce interlinked with the methods and results of training, training of trainers and vocational guidance activities;
- actions to raise awareness of the different economic sectors, training and employment services, research institutes, chambers of commerce and industry, employers and workers organisations and the public authorities, amongst other relevant actors in particular through specific exchange seminars and publication of examples of good practice; support for information services and support structures such as networks for the dissemination of this information.

IV. REGIONAL ELIGIBILITY AND CONCENTRATION

8. This initiative is applicable to the whole of the territory of the Union. However, particular emphasis will be placed on the needs and of the less favoured regions.

V. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

9. Technical assistance will be available at the initiative of the Member States or of the Commission and will be supported during both the stage of preparation of proposals and the subsequent stage of implementation. Technical assistance may include:

- dissemination of information and other awareness actions;
- provision of consultancy and expert services;
- organisation of bilateral or multilateral meetings between Member States and acting organisations to facilitate cooperation;
- development and sharing of databases on labour market, employment training and employment services and other aspects of labour market organisation;
- carrying out of studies regarding innovative methods and the results of training, training of trainers and vocational guidance activities;
- assistance on evaluation procedures and practices;
- creation or development of Community-wide networks to facilitate innovation and transnational cooperation.

A coordinated and coherent approach in regard to related Community action programmes should be ensured in particular for databases, networks and information dissemination. When the Commission proposes to launch a new network, it will inform the Member States in due time.

VI. COMMUNITY FINANCING

10. The actions covered by this initiative shall be jointly financed by the Member States, the Community and by enterprises and other bodies where appropriate. Where employees of companies take part in the various operations, the enterprises concerned shall finance an appropriate part of their cost.

11. The total contribution from the Structural Funds for the period 1994-1999 is estimated at 1,4 billion ECU of which 0,4 billion ECU will be allocated to Objective 1 regions.

12. The distribution of resources between Member States under this initiative will be based on the relative severity of structural problems, including in particular relevant unemployment levels, as well as the quality of the proposals submitted for operational programmes and global grants.

13. Rates of assistance will respect the provisions of the Structural Funds regulations. Under the Technical Assistance provisions, a maximum rate of assistance may be accorded for the transnational actions.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION

14. Member States are invited to present proposals for support in the form of operational programmes or of global grants within four months of the date of publication of this communication. In the latter case, Community assistance may be granted directly to decentralised organisations responsible for implementation, including organisations responsible for managing transnational actions and designated by the Member State concerned.

15. As far as the most remote regions are concerned, the measures laid down in this initiative should, as a priority, be implemented in the framework and within the financial resources of the Community initiative Regis.

16. During the preparation of proposals, Member States are invited to discuss with the Commission the main priorities and eligible measures and the mechanisms of implementation.

17. Use can be made of the provisions for transnational operational programmes whereby two or more Member States may, on their own initiative or at the invitation of the Commission, present a single application for assistance. In response to these applications the Commission may, in consultation with the Member States concerned, take a single decision granting financial support.

18. Within the context of operational programmes or global grants measures should be identified by the main Objectives of the Structural Funds. The proposals must include a general appreciation of the situation indicating the objectives to be attained and should include a timetable, criteria and procedures for implementation, monitoring and assessment.

19. A single Monitoring Committee in each Member State will be responsible for this initiative.

20. It is proposed to develop special support structures for the initiative. Cooperation with other Community initiatives in the context of human resources and of industrial change, in particular the regional reconversion initiatives and the SMEs initiative, and Community action programmes concerned, in particular the action programmes of vocational training, will also be reinforced in terms of guidelines, technical assistance, joint operations and networks, follow-up of projects, evaluation, research and dissemination of information. The national authorities concerned with this initiative will make reciprocal arrangements with those concerned with other related Community programmes to ensure that in the selection of the projects, there is the maximum complementarity and minimum overlap between these programmes.

21. The Commission will require Member States to formulate and implement programmes so as to optimise the conditions for transnational cooperation.

VIII. EVALUATION

22. During and at the end of the planning period the Commission shall evaluate, in partnership with the Member States, the results of the programmes submitted. In order to carry out this evaluation the Commission will use the objectives specified by Member States according to the provisions laid down in Part VII, point 18 as the main benchmark against which to assess progress. As a function of the desired objectives and the implemented measures this evaluation will provide data related to the target groups including the final beneficiaries. The European Parliament, the Management Committee on the Community initiatives and the Committee referred to in Part VII, point 19 of this communication shall be informed of the results of such evaluation measures and the action taken in response to them.

23. Correspondence concerning this communication should be sent to:

Mr H.C. Jones,
Acting Director-General,
Directorate-General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs,
Commission of the European Communities,
Rue de la Loi, 200,
B-1049 Brussels.

NOTICE TO THE MEMBER STATES

laying down guidelines for operational programmes or global grants which they are invited to establish in the framework of a Community initiative concerning the economic conversion of coal-mining areas

(RECHAR II)

(94/C 180/08)

1. At its meeting on 15 June 1994, the Commission of the European Communities decided to extend over the period 1994-1997 the Community initiative concerning the economic conversion of coal-mining areas (hereinafter referred to as 'Rechar'), within the meaning of the Article 11 of Regulation (EEC) No 4253/88, as amended by Council Regulation (EEC) No 2082/93⁽¹⁾, and Article 3(2) of Regulation (EEC) No 4254/88, as amended by Council Regulation (EEC) No 2083/93⁽²⁾.

2. In the context of Rechar, Community assistance in the form of loans and grants is made available for measures and in areas which respect the guidelines laid down in this notice, and which are included in operational programmes or requests for global grants submitted by the Member States and approved by the Commission of the European Communities.

I. DEVELOPMENT AIMS

3. The Commission has taken this decision because many coal-mining areas are amongst the areas of the Community which have been or are likely to be hardest hit by problems of industrial restructuring, and because they have special difficulties in adjusting rapidly to changing economic circumstances. Thus, the Community initiative is designed to help resolve problems common to certain categories of region (Article 3(2) of Regulation (EEC) No 4254/88).

4. The Community initiative is intended to accelerate economic conversion concentrating on the most seriously affected coal-mining-areas, by means of an effort which is additional to that foreseen in Community support frameworks drawn up in accordance with Article 8 of Regulation (EEC) No 4253/88. Priority will be given to improving the environment, to promoting new economic activities and to the development of human resources. Regional and local authorities and the social partners should be involved in the preparation and implementation of operational programmes in the manner appropriate to each Member State.

II. DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE AREAS FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECHAR

5. Assistance from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), from the European Social Fund (ESF), from the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and from the European Investment Bank (EIB) may be made available in areas which figure on the existing list of areas eligible under Rechar⁽³⁾.

Member States may propose to the Commission the addition of other areas to this list, provided these areas:

- a) are eligible under Objective 1, 2 or 5(b), as defined pursuant to Regulation (EEC) No 2052/88, as amended by Regulation (EEC) No 2081/93⁽⁴⁾, subject to the exceptions allowed under paragraph 6.3 below; and
- b) meet the following criteria set out in paragraph 6 below.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No L 193, 31. 7. 1993, p. 24.

⁽²⁾ OJ No L 193, 31. 7. 1993, p. 36.

⁽³⁾ OJ No C 177, 18. 7. 1990, p. 2.

In accordance with paragraph 11 of this notice, the Commission shall determine and publish the areas that it intends to add to the existing list of eligible areas.

6. Eligible areas added to the list of areas already eligible for Rechar from 1994 onwards will be delineated in terms of small spatial units, below administrative level III of the Nomenclature of Territorial Statistical Units (NUTS), or geographically contiguous groups of such units, which:

- 6.1. contain coal-mining activities defined as the extraction from deep or open-cast mines of hard coal or black lignite (coal-mining activities as defined under the ECSC Treaty), as well as the extraction of brown lignite; and
- 6.2. satisfy one of the following conditions:
 - they have lost at least 1 000 coal-mining jobs (all workers employed by any undertaking engaged in coal-mining activities such as defined above, referred to hereafter as coal-mining jobs) since 1 January 1990,
 - the total number of coal-mining jobs lost since that date and future coal-mining job losses publicly announced equals or exceeds 1 000 jobs,
 - the total number of coal-mining jobs lost since 1 January 1990 and the number of such jobs at risk equals or exceeds 1 000. As regards the number of coal-mining jobs at risk, only those jobs will be taken into account which the Commission and the Member State jointly accept to be at risk, in particular because of the high cost of coal production relative to the Community average or the geological conditions which the coal-mining industry is facing in the area concerned. These conditions must be demonstrated by the Member State concerned with the necessary supporting information.
- 6.3. In addition, Member States may propose for eligibility a limited number of other areas, provided the area in question has a high dependence on the coal-mining industry, and taking account of other factors such as high unemployment, environmental degradation, isolation or peripherality. Member States are requested to provide the necessary supporting information.

III. ELIGIBLE MEASURES

7. Community assistance, in the form of loans or grants in aid as appropriate, may be made available within the framework of the Rechar programme, in favour of the following measures:

- a) environmental improvement of areas seriously damaged by coal-mining activity, including coal-tip reclamation, the cleaning-up and conversion of disused coal-mining buildings and their surroundings, the modernization of such premises for small and medium-sized enterprises, landscaping, works to overcome the problem of subsidence, minor works for improving the appearance of buildings and their surroundings, and roads giving access to new activities;
- b) renovation and modernization of social and economic infrastructure (e.g. community facilities, roads, water and electricity supplies) in mining villages provided that such operations are demonstrated to be an integral and essential element of a strategy for the economic regeneration of the areas concerned;
- c) construction of new advance factory units and workshop premises;
- d) promotion of alternative economic activities, and in particular the creation or development of small and medium-sized enterprises, in particular by means of:
 - the provision of assistance for productive investment,
 - better access to venture capital,
 - the establishment or development of common services,
 - assisting the carrying-out of market research and studies, and the establishment and operation of business networks,

- promotion of cooperation between companies and research centres, universities, centres of technology transfer and training centres,
- assisting the promotion of innovation in industry and services, by means of the collection of information relating to product or process innovation and its dissemination and by means of aids to the commercial application of innovations in small and medium-sized enterprises;
- e) assisting the promotion of tourist activities, especially those based on industrial heritage;
- f) assisting the creation or increased activity of economic conversion bodies and regional development teams;
- g) assisting vocational training and employment measures for any person, especially the unemployed, persons threatened with unemployment and persons employed in small and medium-sized enterprises, and especially those involved in an operation which is essential for the achievement of the development and conversion aims of the Rechar initiative; the support for existing vocational training institutes as well as the construction of new facilities for vocational training of all kinds in coalmining areas;
- h) interest rebates on ECSC loans for investments in small and medium-sized enterprises (ECSC definition), and for the reclamation of sites for industrial use;
- i) the promotion of cross-border cooperation between former coal-mining areas;
- j) redeployment aids available under Article 56 of the ECSC Treaty;
- k) any other measure which contributes to the economic conversion of the area concerned and for which loans from the European Investment Bank (EIB) can be approved.

IV. THE COMMUNITY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE FINANCING OF RECHAR

8. The Rechar programmes will be the subject of joint financing by the Member State and the Community. In coal-mining areas eligible for Rechar, the total contribution by the ERDF and ESF during the period 1994 to 1997 is estimated at ECU 400 million.

Loans from EIB and ECSC resources may also be made available.

9. The Commission's decision on the amount of the Community's budget contribution to individual operational programmes will reflect the quality of the programme and the economic and social conditions and development needs of the area at the time of the decision as well as future job losses. The rates of assistance will be decided in conformity with the regulations governing the Structural Funds and take account of the financing capacity of the national and regional authorities concerned. In evaluating the quality of the programmes, the Commission will take into account, in particular, the following elements:

- the presence of a coherent regional strategy with a clear statement of the development and conversion aims into which the aims of the operational programmes for coal-mining areas have been properly integrated;
- the likely development impact of the proposed measures and in particular their contribution to the achievement of the aims of the operational programme;
- a demonstration of the additional character of the resources requested from the Community as well as those made available by the national and regional authorities in support of the operational programme;
- the likely effectiveness of the mechanisms for implementation, monitoring and valuation.

V. IMPLEMENTATION

10. Member States wishing to propose areas to benefit from Rechar not already included in the list published in OJ No C 177 of 18 July 1990 should submit to the Commission their proposals in conformity with the criteria and thresholds given in Section II of this notice within one month of the date of publication of this notice in the Official Journal of the European Communities. Proposals received after this date need not to be taken into consideration by the Commission.

11. The Commission will, after consulting the Member States concerned, determine and publish a revised list of eligible coal-mining areas for the purpose of Rechar in the Official Journal of the European Communities within two months of the latest date for the receipt of the above proposals from Member States. The Commission may extend this list subsequently.

12. Member States wishing to benefit from Rechar having eligible coal-mining areas in the revised list published by the Commission are invited to present detailed proposals for new operational programmes or global grants, or amendments to an existing operational programme specific to Rechar or to a decision in application of a Community Support Framework, within four months of the date of publication of this notice in the Official Journal of the European Communities. Proposals for operational programmes and global grants received after this date need not to be taken into consideration by the Commission.

The proposals must include an appreciation of the situation indicating the objectives to be attained and should include a timetable, criteria and procedures for implementation, monitoring and assessment. During and at the end of the planning period the Commission shall evaluate, in partnership with the Member States, the results of the programmes submitted. The European Parliament, the Management Committee on the Community initiatives and the monitoring committees shall be informed of the results of such evaluations and the action taken in response to them.

13. As far as the most remote regions are concerned, the measures laid down in this initiative should, as a priority, be implemented in the framework and within the financial resources of the Regis Community initiative.

14. Cooperation between beneficiaries will be encouraged both within and between Member States, to foster the exchange of experience, the dissemination of best practice, joint operations and comparative evaluations. The Commission urges Member States to take account of this aim when preparing and subsequently when managing the programmes.

15. All correspondence related to this notice should be addressed to:

Mr E. Landaburu,
Director-General,
Directorate-General for Regional Policy,
Commission of the European Communities,
Rue de la Loi, 200,
B-1049 Brussels.

NOTICE TO THE MEMBER STATES

laying down guidelines for operational programmes or global grants which they are invited to establish in the framework of a Community initiative concerning the economic conversion of steel areas

(RESIDER II)

(94/C 180/07)

1. At its meeting on 15 June 1994, the Commission of the European Communities decided to establish over the period 1994-1997 a Community initiative concerning the economic conversion of steel areas (hereinafter referred to as 'Resider II'), within the meaning of Article 11 of Regulation (EEC) No 4253/88, as amended by Council Regulation (EEC) No 2082/93⁽¹⁾, and Article 3(2) of Regulation (EEC) No 4254/88, as amended by Council Regulation (EEC) No 2083/93⁽²⁾. This initiative will extend measures supported by the Community Resider programme adopted on 2 February 1988⁽³⁾.

2. In the context of Resider II, Community assistance in the form of loans and grants is made available for measures and in areas which respect the guidelines laid down in this notice, and which are included in operational programmes or requests for global grants submitted by the Member States and approved by the Commission of the European Communities.

I. DEVELOPMENT AIMS

3. The Commission has taken this decision because many steel areas are amongst the areas of the Community which have been or are likely to be hardest hit by problems of industrial restructuring, and because they have special difficulties in adjusting rapidly to changing economic circumstances. Thus, the Community initiative is designed to help resolve problems common to certain categories of region (Article 3(2) of Regulation (EEC) No 4254/88).

4. The Community initiative is intended to accelerate economic conversion concentrating on the most seriously affected steel areas, by means of an effort which is additional to that foreseen in Community support frameworks drawn up in accordance with Article 8 of Regulation (EEC) No 4253/88. Priority will be given to improving the environment, to promoting new economic activities and to the development of human resources. Regional and local authorities and the social partners should be involved in the preparation and implementation of operational programmes in the manner appropriate to each Member State.

II. DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE AREAS FOR THE PURPOSE OF RESIDER

5. Assistance from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), from the European Social Fund (ESF), from the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and from the European Investment Bank (EIB) may be made available in steel areas which:

- a) are eligible under Objectives 1, 2 or 5(b), as defined pursuant to Regulation (EEC) No 2052/88, as amended by Regulation (EEC) No 2081/93⁽⁴⁾, subject to the exceptions allowed under paragraph 6.3 below; and
- b) meet the criteria set out in paragraph 6 below.

In accordance with paragraph 11 of this notice, the Commission will determine and publish a list of qualifying areas.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No L 193, 31. 7. 1993, p. 24.

⁽²⁾ OJ No L 193, 31. 7. 1993, p. 36.

⁽³⁾ OJ No L 33, 5. 2. 1988, pp. 1 to 5.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ No L 193, 31. 7. 1993, p. 7.

6. Eligible areas for Resider will be delineated in terms of small spatial units, below administrative level III of the Nomenclature of Territorial Statistical Units (NUTS), or geographically contiguous groups of such units, which:

6.1. contain steel production activities as defined under the ECSC Treaty; and

6.2. satisfy one of the following conditions:

- they have lost at least 1 000 steel jobs (all workers employed by any undertaking engaged in steel production activities within the meaning of the ECSC Treaty, referred to hereafter as steel jobs), since 1 January 1986,
- the total number of steel jobs lost since that date and future steel job losses publicly announced equals or exceeds 1 000 jobs,
- the total number of steel jobs lost since 1 January 1986 and the number of such jobs at risk equals or exceeds 1 000. As regards the number of steel jobs at risk, only those jobs will be taken into account which the Commission and the Member State jointly accept to be at risk. This must be demonstrated by the Member State concerned with the necessary supporting information.

6.3. In addition, Member States may propose for eligibility a limited number of other areas, provided the area in question has a high dependence on the steel industry, and taking account of other factors such as high unemployment, environmental degradation, isolation or peripherality. Member States are requested to provide the necessary supporting information.

III. ELIGIBLE MEASURES

7. Community assistance, in the form of loans or grants in aid as appropriate, may be made available within the framework of the Resider programme, in favour of the following measures:

- a) environmental improvement of areas seriously damaged by steel production, the cleaning-up and conversion of disused steel industrial buildings and their surroundings, the modernization of such premises for small and medium-sized enterprises, landscaping, minor works for improving the appearance of buildings and their surroundings, and roads giving access to new activities;
- b) renovation and modernization of social and economic infrastructure (e.g. community facilities, roads, water and electricity supplies) in steel areas provided that such operations are demonstrated to be an integral and essential element of a strategy for the economic regeneration of the areas concerned;
- c) construction of new advance factory units and workshop premises;
- d) promotion of alternative economic activities, and especially the creation or development of small and medium-sized enterprises, in particular by means of:
 - the provision of assistance for productive investment,
 - better access to venture capital,
 - the establishment or development of common services,
 - assisting the carrying-out of market research and studies, and the establishment and operation of business networks,
 - promotion of cooperation between companies and research centres, universities, centers of technology transfers and training centers.
 - assisting the promotion of innovation in industry and services, by means of the collection of information relating to product or process innovation and its dissemination and by means of aids to the commercial application of innovations in small and medium-sized enterprises;
- e) assisting the promotion of tourist activities, especially those based on industrial heritage;

- f) assisting the creation or increased activity of economic conversion bodies and regional development teams;
- g) assisting vocational training and employment measures for any person, especially the unemployed, persons threatened with unemployment and persons employed in small and medium-sized enterprises, and especially those involved in an operation which is essential for the achievement of the development and conversion aims of the Resider initiative; the support for existing vocational training institutes as well as the construction of new facilities for vocational training of all kinds in steel areas;
- h) interest rebates on ECSC loans for investments in small and medium-sized enterprises (ECSC definition), and for the reclamation of sites for industrial use;
- i) the promotion of cross-border cooperation between former steel areas;
- j) redeployment aids available under Article 56 of the ECSC Treaty;
- k) any other measure which contributes to the economic conversion of the area concerned and for which loans from the European Investment Bank (EIB) can be approved.

IV. THE COMMUNITY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE FINANCING OF RESIDER

8. The Resider programmes will be jointly financed by the Member State and the Community. In steel areas eligible for Resider, the total contribution by the ERDF and ESF during the period 1994 to 1997 is estimated at ECU 500 million.

Loans from EIB and ECSC resources may also be made available.

9. The Commission's decision on the amount of the Community's budget contribution to individual operational programmes will reflect the quality of the programme and the economic and social conditions and development needs of the area at the time of the decision as well as future job losses. The rates of assistance will be decided in conformity with the regulations governing the Structural Funds and take account of the financing capacity of the national and regional authorities concerned. In evaluating the quality of the programmes, the Commission will take into account, in particular, the following elements:

- the presence of a coherent regional strategy with a clear statement of the development and conversion aims into which the aims of the operational programmes for steel areas have been properly integrated,
- the likely development impact of the proposed measures and in particular their contribution to the achievement of the aims of the operational programme,
- a demonstration of the additional character of the resources requested from the Community as well as those made available by the national and regional authorities in support of the operational programme,
- the likely effectiveness of the mechanisms for implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

V. IMPLEMENTATION

10. Member States wishing to propose areas to benefit from Resider should submit to the Commission their proposals in conformity with the criteria and thresholds given in Section II of this notice within one month of the date of publication of this notice in the Official Journal of the European Communities. Proposals received after this date need not to be taken into consideration by the Commission.

11. The Commission will, after consulting the Member States concerned, determine and publish a list of eligible steel areas for the purpose of Resider in the Official Journal of the European Communities within two months of the latest date for the receipt of the above proposals from Member States.

12. Member States wishing to benefit from Resider and having eligible steel areas in the list published by the Commission are invited to present detailed proposals for operational programmes or global grants within four months of the date of publication of this notice in the Official Journal of the European Communities. Proposals for operational programmes or global grants received after this date need not to be taken into consideration by the Commission.

The proposals must include an appreciation of the situation indicating the objectives to be attained and should include a timetable, criteria and procedures for implementation, monitoring and assessment. During and at the end of the planning period the Commission shall evaluate, in partnership with the Member States, the results of the programmes submitted. The European Parliament, the Management Committee on the Community initiatives and the monitoring committees shall be informed of the results of such evaluations and the action taken in response to them.

13. As far as the most remote regions are concerned, the measures laid down in this initiative should, as a priority, be implemented in the framework and within the financial resources of the Regis Community initiative.

14. Cooperation between beneficiaries will be encouraged both within and between Member States, to foster the exchange of experience, the dissemination of best practice, joint operations and comparative evaluations. The Commission urges Member States to take account of this aim when preparing and subsequently when managing the programmes.

15. All correspondence related to this notice should be addressed to:

Mr E. Landaburu,
Director-General,
Directorate-General for Regional Policy,
Commission of the European Communities,
Rue de la Loi, 200,
B-1049 Brussels.

NOTICE TO THE MEMBER STATES

laying down guidelines for operational programmes or global grants which Member States are invited to establish in the framework of a Community initiative concerning defence conversion

(KONVER)

(94/C 180/06)

1. At its meeting on 15 June 1994, the Commission of the European Communities decided to establish a Community initiative for regions heavily dependent on defence activities (hereinafter referred to as Konver), within the meaning of Article 11 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 4253/88, as amended by Council Regulation (EEC) No 2082/93⁽¹⁾, and Article 3(2) of Regulation (EEC) No 4254/88, as amended by Council Regulation (EEC) No 2083/93⁽²⁾.

2. In the context of Konver, Community assistance in the form of loans and grants is made available for measures and in areas which respect the guidelines laid down in this notice, and which are included in operational programmes or requests for global grants submitted by the Member States and approved by the Commission of the European Communities.

I. DEVELOPMENT AIMS

3. The purpose of the Community initiative is to accelerate the diversification of economic activities in regions heavily dependent on the defence sector, *inter alia* by the conversion of economic activities linked to this sector, so as to render them less dependent on this sector and encourage the adjustment of commercially viable businesses in all sectors of industrial activity.

II. ELIGIBLE MEASURES

4. Measures are intended to assist all sectors of industrial activity in regions eligible under Konver. In areas eligible for assistance under Objectives 1, 2 and 5(b), the qualifying measures will complement the schemes to assist industry, which include assistance for investment in production equipment, contained in the relevant Community support framework.

Programmes submitted by Member States should consist of a balanced set of measures.

Assistance should not be given to activities which could have either a dual application, civilian and military, or a purely military application.

The measures may include:

- a) improving know-how by providing businesses with aid to pay for advisory services and the equipment (excluding production machinery) to put the advice into practice, in the fields of design, quality control, computer-aided manufacturing and planning, marketing and internal business organization, and the health and safety of the workforce;
- b) aid for the formation of local associations of businesses and other cooperation schemes for the purpose of:
 - improving know-how in the areas described under (a) above;
 - accelerating the spread of innovative production methods and new forms of business organization;
 - cooperation between companies and research centres, universities, technology transfer centres and training centres;

⁽¹⁾ OJ No L 193, 31. 7. 1993, p. 24.

⁽²⁾ OJ No L 193, 31. 7. 1993, p. 36.

- marketing and diversification of products;
 - strengthening links between firms and their suppliers and customers in order to meet new requirements for flexibility and quality;
 - improving information on market trends in association with schemes to support design, quality and marketing;
 - creating networks of contacts elsewhere in the same Member State and the rest of the Community in connection with the above measures;
- c) the setting up of a team to provide ideas and advice coordinated with aid schemes (particularly those listed under (a) and (b) above) to sectors which comprise large numbers of small and medium-sized businesses in the form of internal audits of firms, awareness of their changing environment, and counselling when defining and implementing their modernization plans;
- d) temporary contributions towards paying engineers, technical staff and managers who are recruited to help in implementing modernization plans drawn up with the assistance of outside experts, particularly the team referred to in (c);
- e) vocational training schemes for staff of businesses, associations of businesses and providers of joint services based in the regions concerned, and for staff in firms or in military installations faced with redundancy or already unemployed;
- f) environmental improvements and regeneration of military sites and areas seriously damaged by military activity, the cleaning-up and conversion of disused military buildings and their surroundings, the modernization of such premises for small and medium-sized enterprises, landscaping, minor works for improving the appearance of buildings, and roads giving access to new activities;
- g) promotion of alternative economic activities, with an emphasis on the creation or development of small and medium-sized enterprises, in particular through:
- the provision of assistance for productive investment,
 - the promotion of better access to venture capital and loans,
 - the establishment or development of common services;
- h) feasibility studies and conversion strategies;
- i) renovation and modernization of social and economic infrastructure (e.g. community facilities, roads, water and electricity supplies) in defence areas provided that such operations are demonstrated to be an integral and essential element of a strategy for the economic regeneration of the areas concerned; -
- j) assisting the promotion of tourism;
- k) Programmes should encourage greater employment of women, and should take account of their special training needs.

III. ELIGIBLE AREAS

5.1. Eligible areas for Konver will be delineated in terms of small spatial units, at administrative level III of the Nomenclature of Territorial Statistical Units (NUTS), or below when relevant (travel-to-work areas level), or geographically contiguous groups of such units. To become eligible under Konver, the areas should meet one of the following criteria:

- they must have lost at least 1 000 jobs in defence activities since 1 January 1990,
- the total number of jobs lost in defence activities since that date and future job losses publicly announced in the defence activities must equal or exceed 1 000 jobs,
- the total number of jobs lost in defence activities since 1 January 1990 and the number of such jobs at risk must equal or exceed 1 000. In assessing the number of such jobs at risk, only those jobs which the Commission and the Member State jointly accept to be at risk will be taken into account. This condition must be demonstrated by the Member State concerned with the necessary supporting information.

For the purpose of this initiative, defence employment is defined as:

- military personnel, including foreign forces;
- civilian personnel employed in military bases;
- personnel employed in companies primarily involved in the production of defence equipment.

5.2. In addition, Member States may propose for eligibility a limited number of other areas, provided the area in question has a high dependence on defence activities, and taking account of other factors such as high unemployment, environmental degradation, isolation or peripherality. Member States are requested to provide the necessary supporting information.

6. Member States wishing to propose areas to benefit from Konver should submit to the Commission a list of such areas and the employment statistics relating to them, in conformity with the above criteria. In their proposals, they should clearly distinguish areas eligible under Objectives 1, 2 and 5(b) from the others. The submissions should be made within one month of the date of publication of this notice in the Official Journal of the European Communities. Proposals received after this date need not be taken into consideration by the Commission.

7. The Commission will, after consultations with the Member States concerned, determine and publish a list of eligible areas for the purpose of Konver in the Official Journal of the European Communities within two months of the latest date for the receipt of the above proposals from Member States. In determining the list of eligible areas for the purpose of Konver, the Commission will have regard to paragraph 8 below, and to the capacity of the economy of the regions in which eligible areas are proposed to absorb the impact of job losses.

8. Pursuant to Article 11(2) of Council Regulation (EEC) No 4253/88, referred to above, a maximum of 50 % of the total Community contribution which is made available under Konver can be spent in areas which are not eligible for assistance under Objective 1, 2 or 5(b) of the Structural Funds.

IV. THE COMMUNITY'S CONTRIBUTION TO FINANCING THE KONVER INITIATIVE

9. Operational programmes under Konver are jointly financed by the Member States and the Community. The financial requirement up to the end of 1997 for the Community contribution to Konver is estimated at ECU 500 million (1994 prices). Loans from EIB resources may also be made available.

10. The apportionment among Member States of the Community assistance made available under Konver will depend on the agreed estimate of employment in defence activities as well as of job losses and jobs at risk in the same activities, in accordance with paragraph 5 above.

11. The Commission's decision on the amount of the Community's budget contribution to individual operational programmes will reflect the quality of the programme and the economic and social conditions and development needs of the area at the time of the decision, as well as job losses. The operational programme should be part of a coherent regional strategy with a clear statement of the overall development and conversion aims into which the aims of the programmes have been integrated.

V. IMPLEMENTATION

12. Member States wishing to benefit from Konver and having eligible defence areas in the list published by the Commission are invited to present operational programmes or applications for global grants within four months of the publication of the present notice in the Official Journal of the European Communities. Proposals for operational programmes and global grants received after this date need not be taken into consideration by the Commission.

The proposals must include an appreciation of the situation indicating the objectives to be attained and should include a timetable, criteria and procedures for implementation, monitoring and assessment. During and at the end of the planning period the Commission shall evaluate, in partnership with the Member States, the results of the programmes submitted. The European Parliament, the Management Committee on the Community initiatives and the monitoring committees shall be informed of the results of such evaluations and the action taken in response to them.

13. As far as the most remote regions are concerned, the measures laid down in this initiative should, as a priority, be implemented in the framework and within the financial resources of the Community initiative Regis.

The Commission will offer the necessary technical assistance during the preparation of proposals.

Regional and local authorities and the social partners should be involved in the preparation and implementation of operational programmes in the manner appropriate to each Member State.

14. Cooperation between beneficiaries will be encouraged both within and between Member States, to foster joint operation, comparative evaluations, the exchange of experience and the dissemination of best practice. The Commission urges Member States to take account of this aim when preparing and subsequently when managing the programmes.

15. All correspondence relating to this notice should be addressed to:

Mr E. Landaburu,
Director-General,
Directorate-General for Regional Policy,
Commission of the European Communities,
Rue de la Loi, 200,
B-1049 Brussels.

NOTICE TO THE MEMBER STATES

laying down guidelines for the Retex initiative⁽¹⁾

(94/C 180/05)

1. At its meeting on 15 June 1994, the Commission of the European Community clarified certain details for the continued application of the Retex initiative, the guidelines for which were published in the Official Journal of the European Communities on 4 June 1992.
2. The fifth subparagraph of paragraph 4 of the guidelines states that, from 1 January 1994 onwards, zones heavily dependent on the textile and clothing sector within the five East German Länder, and other zones heavily dependent on the textile and clothing sector which have become eligible under Objectives 1, 2 or 5(b), are eligible to Retex. However, with the exception of those selected as eligible under Retex in 1993, areas which are not eligible for Community assistance under Objectives 1, 2 and 5(b) are not eligible to Retex either.
3. With regard to measure (c) in the Retex programme, the Commission expects that the programmes to be presented for new areas will pay particular attention to the specific vocational training needs of women.
4. The amount required for the implementation of Retex over the period 1994-1997 is estimated at ECU 500 million.
5. Member States wishing to propose new areas qualifying under the criteria set out in paragraph 6 of the guidelines for Retex, and which, from the beginning of 1994, become eligible for Community assistance under Objectives 1, 2 or 5(b), should forward to the Commission a list of those areas and the statistics of employment relating thereto within one month of the date of publication of this notice in the Official Journal of the European Communities.
6. Member States wishing to benefit from Retex in this form are invited to present operational programmes within four months of the date of publication of this notice in the Official Journal of the European Communities. Proposals for operational programmes received after this date need not be taken into consideration by the Commission.

The proposals must include an appreciation of the situation indicating the objectives to be attained and should include a timetable, criteria and procedures for implementation, monitoring and assessment. During and at the end of the planning period the Commission shall evaluate, in partnership with the Member States, the results of the programmes submitted. The European Parliament, the Management Committee on the Community initiatives and the monitoring committees shall be informed of the results of such evaluations and the action taken in response to them.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 142, 4. 6. 1992, p. 5.

NOTICE TO THE MEMBER STATES

laying down guidelines for the initiative concerning the modernization of the Portuguese textile and clothing industry

(94/C 180/04)

1. At its meeting on 15 June 1994, the Commission of the European Communities decided to establish a Community initiative forming part of a general regional development framework and concerning the modernization of the Portuguese textile and clothing industry, within the meaning of Article 11 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 4253/88, as amended by Regulation (EEC) No 2082/93 ⁽¹⁾, and Article 3 of Regulation (EEC) No 4254/88, as amended by Council Regulation (EEC) No 2083/93 ⁽²⁾.

I. OBJECTIVES

2. The reason for the initiative is to promote the modernization of textile and clothing undertakings in Portugal to facilitate their adaptation to increasing international competition.

The grant of Community aid under this initiative is subject to approval by the Commission of a strategy of adaptation for the textile and clothing industry for the period 1994-1999 to be submitted by the Portuguese authorities. The strategy will also define rules governing aid for undertakings, in particular as regards compliance with the requirement that there is to be no overall increase in Portuguese production capacity in the textile and clothing industry in terms of volume.

II. ELIGIBLE MEASURES

3. The measures cover undertakings in the textile and clothing sector at present situated on Portuguese territory. The programme submitted by the Portuguese authorities should comprise a balanced set of measures consistent with the general framework of regional development in Portugal and the overall strategy for the adaptation of the textile and clothing sector, centring on the preparation and implementation of individual modernization plans for the undertakings in the sector, the development of cooperation between undertakings, and an improvement in their environment in terms of services.

Eligible measures may cover:

- a) Aid for the financing of external expert reports intended to assist undertakings in preparing their modernization plans and improving their know-how, for example in the fields of design, quality policy, computer-assisted design and production, marketing, internal business organization and employee health and safety;
- b) Vocational training measures linked to the preparation and implementation of modernization plans and retraining for personnel threatened by unemployment or already unemployed;
- c) In the case of SMEs which already have a modernization plan drawn up with the aid of external experts, a temporary contribution towards the financing of the salaries of engineers, technicians or management personnel employed to assist in the implementation of those plans;
- d) The financing of business modernization plans to cover non-material investments, improvements in know-how or material investments, including equipment intended directly for production.

Investments in production equipment will be promoted only by means of providing access for undertakings to risk capital, by means of loans from the EIB or other financial bodies with interest subsidies and by means of guarantee funds;

⁽¹⁾ OJ No L 193, 31. 7. 1993, p. 24.

⁽²⁾ OJ No L 193, 31. 7. 1993, p. 36.

- e) The setting up of promotion and advisory teams for the textile and clothing sector responsible for making businesses more aware of the need to improve their know-how, and helping them to develop cooperation amongst themselves and with their suppliers and clients;
- f) Aid for the adaptation of textile and clothing undertakings, in particular to Community environmental requirements, intended to reduce pollution by textile and clothing undertakings by facilitating the treatment and recycling of liquid effluents and industrial waste, and by providing technical assistance for the development of less polluting production or maintenance processes.

III. CONDITIONS FOR GRANTING COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE

4. When each decision on the financing of business modernization plans is taken, the Portuguese authorities, who are responsible for laying down rules governing the aid, must verify that the plans are consistent with the overall adaptation strategy agreed with the Commission. They must make the grant of aid conditional upon subsequent compliance with the agreed plan. The necessary provisions governing the examination of aid applications, monitoring the implementation of the adaptation plans and the penalties to be applied in the event of failure to comply with the conditions for aid, shall be determined by joint agreement between the Portuguese authorities and the Commission of the European Communities.

Investment projects financed under this initiative are part of the framework of existing horizontal aid schemes in Portugal. Thus, the projects must meet the eligibility criteria laid down for those schemes. Therefore, no specific aid scheme will be established for the textile and clothing sector.

Undertakings receiving aid will have to prove that they comply with national legislation on working conditions.

IV. THE COMMUNITY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE FINANCING OF THE INITIATIVE

5. The Portuguese textile operational programme is to be joint-financed by the Member State and the Community. The total Structural Fund contribution to this initiative for the period 1994-1999 is ECU 400 million. There may also be loans from the European Investment Bank. In order to facilitate this type of financing, Portuguese undertakings will qualify for interest subsidies to be financed, up to ECU 100 million, from the exceptional allocation provided for this initiative.

V. IMPLEMENTATION

6. Portugal must submit a detailed proposal for the operational programme within four months of the date of publication of this notice in the Official Journal of the European Communities. Proposals for operational programmes received after this date need not be taken into consideration by the Commission.

Every six months the Commission and the Portuguese authorities will check for compliance with the overall strategy agreed with the Commission, within the appropriate monitoring committee, on the basis of reports on the progress of programme implementation and, where appropriate, independent assessments.

The regional and local authorities and the social partners must be involved in the most appropriate manner in the preparation and implementation of the operational programme.

The proposals must include an appreciation of the situation indicating the objectives to be attained and should include a timetable, criteria and procedures for implementation, monitoring and assessment. During and at the end of the planning period the Commission shall evaluate, in partnership with the Member States, the results of the programmes submitted. The European Parliament, the Management Committee on the Community initiatives and the monitoring committees shall be informed of the results of such evaluations and the action taken in response to them.

7. All correspondence relating to this notice should be addressed to:

Mr E. Landaburu,
Director-General,
Directorate-General for Regional Policies,
Commission of the European Communities,
Rue de la Loi, 200,
B-1049 Brussels.

NOTICE TO THE MEMBER STATES

laying down guidelines for operational programmes or global grants which they are invited to propose in the framework of a Community initiative concerning the adaptation of small and medium-sized enterprises to the single market

(SMEs INITIATIVE)

(94/C 180/03)

1. At its meeting on 15 June 1994, the Commission of the European Communities decided to establish a Community initiative concerning the adaptation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) within the meaning of Article 11 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 4253/88, as amended by Council Regulation (EEC) No 2082/93⁽¹⁾, and Article 3(2) of Council Regulation (EEC) No 4254/88, as amended by Council Regulation (EEC) No 2083/93⁽²⁾.

2. Under this initiative, Community assistance in the form of loans and grants is made available for measures and in areas which respect the guidelines laid down in this notice, and which are included in operational programmes or applications for global grants submitted by the Member States and approved by the Commission of the European Communities.

I. OBJECTIVES

3. This initiative aims to stimulate small and medium-sized industrial or service enterprises (SMEs), particularly in the less developed regions, to adapt to the single market, and to ensure that they become internationally competitive. The role of small firms will be taken into account.

II. PRIORITIES

4. *The seven priorities*

Effectiveness requires a concentration of financial resources on the following limited number of priorities:

- a) improving the production systems and the organization of SMEs primarily by intangible investments concerning:
 - adoption of a strategy of total quality;
 - promotion of technological innovations;
 - management and organization;
 - use of modern communications and information systems;
- b) taking into account the environment and the rational use of energy;
- c) encouraging cooperation between research centres and SMEs, so that research carried out in the regions becomes more responsive to local needs, so that SMEs can meet a greater part of their requirements for assistance relating to the transfer and application of technology from local facilities and so that SMEs are encouraged to innovate and to employ highly qualified personnel;
- d) facilitating access to new markets, including public markets within the single market and markets in non-member countries;
- e) developing cooperation and networks between suppliers of services to the SMEs, between lead firms and SME subcontractors, and between producers, suppliers and customers;

⁽¹⁾ OJ No L 193, 31. 7. 1993, p. 24.

⁽²⁾ OJ No L 193, 31. 7. 1993, p. 36.

- f) strengthening vocational qualifications within SMEs related to the other priority topics;
- g) improving access of SMEs to finance and credit.

III. ELIGIBLE MEASURES

5. The list which follows presents all the measures which can be financed under this initiative. When preparing their operational programmes, Member States should select a more limited and balanced list of measures on which to concentrate assistance. This choice should be determined with regard to the priorities referred to in paragraph 4 above, and be consistent with the measures included in the Community Support Frameworks in relation to which this initiative is intended to be complementary.

6. *Definition of SMEs*

6.1. For the purpose of this initiative, an SME is defined as an enterprise which has:

- not more than 250 employees,
- either an annual turnover not exceeding ECU 20 million, or a total balance sheet not exceeding ECU 10 million,
- is not more than 25 % owned by one or more companies not fulfilling the criteria set out in the above definition, except public investment corporations, venture capital companies or, provided no control is exercised, institutional investors.

6.2. Producer cooperatives are eligible to participate in the scheme.

6.3. Measures referred to hereafter under 7.1, 7.2, 7.4, 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3 may also be applied in favour of enterprises of between 250 and 500 employees, in particular where Objective 1 regions are concerned.

7. *Measures to improve the business know-how of SMEs*

7.1. Grants to SMEs for external expertise intended to help them identify the implications of changes in their industrial environment and to define and implement business strategy plans covering some or all of the priorities listed in paragraph 4. These plans may, where appropriate, be established through cooperation between a large firm and their SME partners and subcontractors.

7.2. Grants to SMEs for the preparation of their business strategy plan, including start-ups and the launching of new products, limited to the financing of intangible investments (e.g. patents, certification of quality, research, development, software) and temporary hiring of experts.

7.3. Demonstration measures related to the adoption of total quality systems, the development of clean technologies and clean production processes, the use of services linked to advanced telecommunications systems, and the use in companies of data processing in production processes, for example the introduction of robots and CAD-CAM systems.

7.4. Grants for the promotion of regional, interregional and transnational cooperation between SMEs including the establishment of common services (e.g. research, design, marketing and data telecommunication networks) where appropriate with a view to establishing or reinforcing clusters of inter-related activities. These measures include support for contractual relations in the framework of cooperation agreements.

- 7.5. Promotion of cooperation in RTD between SMEs and between SMEs and research centres, technology transfer centres, universities and training centres through:
 - a) the setting up and operation of consortia and other bodies which foster cooperative links among education and research bodies and between them and SMEs;
 - b) establishing or supporting aid schemes for SMEs in the following fields where expenditure results from a joint research project carried out by more than one SME or by an SME and a research centre, university or other appropriate body:
 - assistance for the purchase of equipment and know-how for applied research, experimental development, pilot projects and the introduction of innovation into products and processes, and research related to quality control,
 - approved research projects undertaken by SMEs,
 - expert studies for the technical and financial evaluation of research or innovation plans.
- 7.6. Grants to improve the use by SMEs of advanced telecommunication service networks, in particular as regards communications between suppliers, producers and customers.
- 7.7. Grants for the costs incurred by SMEs in the field of public procurement and relating to advice, technical assistance, training and specifications.
- 7.8. Grants to SMEs for the adoption of continuing training programmes within SMEs, carried out with the aid of other companies or of external agencies and for training activities aiming to improve the skills of entrepreneurs, managers and supervisory staff. This may include the short-term secondment of such staff from SMEs located in eligible regions to research centres, firms or agencies providing services related to the seven priorities in other regions of the Community. These measures are carried out in the context of a business strategy plan established by the company and will be conducted in synergy with those under Objective 4.
- 7.9. Interest subsidies linked to EIB loans including EIF facilities or loans provided by other financial institutions; grants to SMEs for implementing their business strategy plan; development of equity participation funds and other innovative financial engineering instruments such as loan guarantee funds, in order to improve SMEs' access to venture capital.

8. *Measures to improve the business environment for SMEs*

- 8.1. Promotion of cooperation between SMEs, the research community and public administrations to assess technology requirements and to audit local capabilities and potential, particularly through the creation and operation of regional networks for the exchange of experience and best practice and the dissemination of R&D results.
- 8.2. Development and networking of local teams designed for example to make the SMEs more aware of changes in their industrial environment, to carry out audits intended to identify their problems, and to direct them towards specialized service suppliers, or to cooperation adapted to their needs.
- 8.3. Development of service suppliers for SMEs, specialised in the priorities under paragraph 4 above (e.g. metrology and calibration laboratories, testing laboratories, research centres and centres for technology transfer; agencies specialising in audits and advice as regards product quality and certification, design, organization and marketing, the environment and efficient energy use) and of the quality of services offered by these organizations, by cooperation with organizations in other regions of the Community (e.g. personnel exchanges, secondment for training, cooperation on expert appraisals, identification of partners).

This may include measures to help eligible areas make better use of data communications services offered elsewhere in the Union.

8.4. Development and networking of service suppliers in the field of public procurement which make available specialised information adapted to the needs and capacities of the regional SMEs in order to facilitate their entry to public sector markets in the region, the Member State or in other countries. These services should, in particular:

- promote the association of SMEs from different regions or Member States in order to facilitate their participation in public contracts on a basis of reciprocity as between countries and regions,
- set up systems for assessing the capacity of SMEs to compete in specific public sector markets,
- improve the information available,
- provide technical, legal and linguistic assistance to SMEs for the preparation and follow-up of tenders and admission to the pre-selection lists of awarding authorities,
- provide specialised training in the field of public procurement.

IV. COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION TO THE FINANCING OF THIS INITIATIVE

9. The operational programmes are to be jointly financed by the Member State and the Community. The total contribution of the Structural Funds for the period 1994-1999 is estimated at ECU 1 000 million, of which ECU 800 million will be allocated to Objective 1 regions. The remaining ECU 200 million should be spent in Objective 2 or 5(b) regions. However, this condition does not prevent SMEs outside these areas participating in networking activities linked to the initiative.

EIB loans may also be made available.

10. The amount of the Community's budget contribution to individual operational programmes or for global grants will take account of the relative economic importance of SMEs in the regions concerned and the quality of the proposal. In evaluating the quality of the proposal, the Commission will take into account the following elements in particular:

- a) the business strategy plans which condition the granting of a part of the aid for SMEs;
- b) the analysis of business services available in relation to present and possible future requirements, and proposals for the development of networking with services available elsewhere in the Community;
- c) the setting up of structures suitable for encouraging dialogue between social partners, for sharing experience, for the transfer of know-how, as well as for local, interregional and transnational cooperation;
- d) programmes should include greater employment of women in SMEs, and should take account of their special training needs.

V. IMPLEMENTATION

11. Member States wishing to benefit from this initiative are invited to submit requests for support in the form of operational programmes or of global grants within four months of the publication of this communication in the Official Journal of the European Communities. Proposals for operational programmes and global grants received after this date need not be taken into consideration by the Commission.

The proposals must include an appreciation of the situation indicating the objectives to be attained and should include a timetable, criteria and procedures for implementation, monitoring and assessment. During and at the end of the planning period the Commission shall evaluate, in partnership with the Member States, the results of the programmes submitted. The European Parliament, the Management Committee on the Community initiatives and the monitoring committees shall be informed of the results of such evaluations and the action taken in response to them.

12. As far as the most remote regions are concerned, the measures laid down in this initiative should, as a priority, be implemented in the framework and within the financial resources of the Community initiative REGIS.

13. In the preparation stage, the Commission will offer the necessary technical assistance to assist in the identification of measures in relation to the priorities, and in relation to the definition of the mechanisms of implementation.

14. Cooperation between beneficiaries will be encouraged both within and between Member States, to foster the exchange of experience, the dissemination of best practice, joint operations and comparative evaluations. The Commission urges Member States to take account of this aim when preparing and subsequently when managing the programmes.

15. Community assistance may be granted either to a central government administration, or in the form of global grants directly to decentralised organizations responsible for implementation, and designated by the Member State concerned, including organizations responsible for managing transnational actions which involve expenditure in several Member States.

16. All correspondence relating to this notice should be addressed to:

Mr E. Landaburu,
Director-General,
Directorate-General for Regional Policies,
Commission of the European Communities,
Rue de la Loi, 200,
B-1049 Brussels.

NOTICE TO THE MEMBER STATES

laying down guidelines for operational programmes which Member States are invited to establish in the framework of a Community initiative concerning urban areas

(URBAN)

(94/C 180/02)

1. At its meeting on 15 June 1994, the Commission of the European Communities decided to establish a Community initiative concerning urban areas (hereafter called URBAN) within the meaning of Article 11 of Regulation (EEC) No 2082/93⁽¹⁾ amending Regulation (EEC) No 4253/88 and Article 3(2) of Regulation (EEC) No 2083/93⁽²⁾ amending Regulation (EEC) No 4254/88.

2. In the context of Urban, Community assistance in the form of loans and grants and technical assistance is made available for measures in areas which respect the guidelines laid down in this notice, and which are included in operational programmes submitted by the Member States and approved by the Commission of the European Communities.

I. SCOPE AND OBJECTIVE

3. Some of the Community's most acute problems associated with lack of economic opportunity, low incomes and a generally poor quality of life are found in urban areas. The growing tensions within European society are evident particularly in the serious level of social exclusion in an increasing number of inner city or peripheral urban areas.

4. Problems are often aggravated by the financial difficulties of many urban local authorities who are unable to provide increasingly expensive support services for a less affluent population. This leads to the deterioration of the urban fabric, the impossibility of renovating or replacing obsolete infrastructures and the disappearance or severe reduction of economic activity in the worst affected areas.

5. Difficult neighbourhoods within cities may be identified geographically. Certain socio-economic indicators are significantly worse than the average of the city or urban agglomeration area. These would include unemployment levels, education attainment, the crime rate, standard of housing, the percentage of social-welfare benefit recipients, the socio-ethnic mix, environmental decay, deteriorating public transport and poor local facilities etc. These deprived areas can also be within generally prosperous cities, or in cities which are the most prosperous parts of a less developed region.

6. Urban issues should be tackled in an integrated way, supporting business creation, improving infrastructures and the physical environment, providing customised training, actions for equality of opportunities and social amenities. The combined effort of ERDF and ESF will be needed, but it has to be complemented by other resources.

7. This initiative cannot hope to match in scale what is in effect a major problem of contemporary society. It aims instead to act as a catalyst in a broad-based approach, by undertaking key schemes to help deprived urban areas achieve a lasting improvement in living standards for their inhabitants.

8. It will provide assistance to the responsible authorities in their efforts to provide the necessary amenities so as to attract economic activity and create confidence and security for the population living in the areas, integrating them into the economy and the social mainstream.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No L 193, 31. 7. 1993, p. 24.

⁽²⁾ OJ No L 193, 31. 7. 1993, p. 36.

II. DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE AREAS FOR THE PURPOSE OF URBAN

9. Eligible areas for the purpose of the Urban initiative will include a limited number of urban areas within cities and urban agglomerations with a population of more than 100 000. There are some 350-400 such cities in the European Union. In exceptional cases urban areas in smaller cities could be taken into consideration.

10. Target areas could be urban neighbourhoods geographically identifiable; either an existing administrative unit such as a borough, a commune or even smaller entities within a densely populated area, with a minimum size of population, with a high level of unemployment, with a decayed urban fabric, bad housing conditions and lack of social amenities. In addition, in duly justified cases support could be provided for actions in medium sized or smaller cities suffering from overall economic decline.

11. Priority would be given to urban areas in cities located in objective 1 regions.

12. The number of individual projects that could be supported by this initiative might be a maximum of fifty. Projects should be completed at the latest in 1999. They should have a demonstrative character for other urban areas suffering from similar problems. Each Member State would send a limited list of proposed projects, in agreement with the local and other authorities concerned.

13. Priority will be given to innovative projects forming part of long term urban integration strategies being implemented by the cities concerned. The drafting of plans of this kind could be supported, at the request of a Member State, by technical assistance.

III. ELIGIBLE MEASURES

14. Community assistance, in the form of loans or grants in aid as appropriate, may be made available within the framework of the Urban initiative, in favour of integrated development programmes for a geographically defined and limited part of a city. The integrated approach should address in a comprehensive way the economic, social and environmental problems of the deprived urban area. The integrated programme should comprise a balanced and coherent set of economic development, social integration and environmental measures based on local partnership proposals. Priority will be given to integrated programmes which are of an innovative character, which have a demonstrable added value and help create local employment.

15. There should be a systematic attempt to add the multiplier effect of public input in support of private and collective efforts. The structural funds cannot be involved in all areas e.g. housing but can contribute to concerted action by national and city authorities. In this context the Funds could support the preparation of overall urban strategies at the request of the Member States or the regional or local authorities concerned.

16. The initiative should also back European networks for mutual cooperation and exchange of information in sharing experience from schemes that have already proved successful, so far as these requirements are not met by cooperation activities assisted under other Community initiatives introduced under the structural funds regulations or other programmes of the Community. These exchange of experience networks can include cities in regions not currently eligible for ERDF assistance.

17. In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, the measures to be included in an integrated programme should be drawn up by the local partnership, taking into account the diversity of problems faced by cities. The following list of possible measures that could feature in integrated programmes is intended to be illustrative and indicative. It comprises a number of types of measures which have been included in the Urban Pilot Programme financed under Article 10 of the ERDF Regulation.

- Launching of new economic activities:
 - Provision of workshops; support for business, commerce, cooperatives, mutual associations, and services for SMEs; creation of business centres, technology transfer;
 - Creation of public/private partnerships in particular to manage integrated economic development programmes;
 - Creation of a pool of management and marketing consultants; customised counselling for businessmen; advice to starters.
- Ensuring employment for local people:
 - Customised training schemes and language training oriented in particular to the specific needs of minorities;
 - Training for new technologies, e.g. computer skills needed in the financial services sector or computer based production for the commercial arts;
 - Mobile units for employment and training advice;
 - Work-experience schemes for long term unemployed on local rehabilitation projects;
 - Support for job intensive projects at the local level.
- Improvement of social, health and security provisions:
 - Provision of nursery and creche facilities;
 - Improvement of health conditions; drug rehabilitation centres;
 - Increasing security and preventing criminality, involvement of residents in the supervision of neighbourhoods; improved street lighting.
- Improvement of infrastructures and environmental conditions linked to the above measures:
 - Renovation of buildings to accommodate new social and economic activities;
 - Rehabilitation of public spaces including green areas;
 - Improvement of energy efficiency;
 - Improvement to access to telematic services;
 - Reclamation of derelict sites and contaminated land;
 - Provision of cultural, leisure and sports amenities;
 - Actions to facilitate the mobility of the local population.
- Special workshops to give incentives, skills and opportunities to residents for the refurbishing, maintenance and improving of security of housing estates.
- Support in improving the local capacity to solve problems, including exchange schemes and the creation of partnerships of the city organisations and actors concerned.

IV. THE COMMUNITY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE FINANCING OF URBAN

18. The total contribution by the Structural Funds to the Urban initiative during the period 1994-1999 is estimated at ECU 600 million of which ECU 400 million should go to Objective 1 areas and ECU 200 million to other areas with a preference for Objective 2 areas.

19. Where possible and appropriate, operations funded by this initiative should be planned and implemented taking into account other actions under the Structural Funds and Community programmes such as Poverty IV and Leonardo as well as actions supported by grants from the EFTA Cohesion Fund and loans from the European Investment Bank.

V. IMPLEMENTATION

20. Member States wishing to benefit from Urban are invited to present operational programmes or where appropriate, applications for global grants for urban areas within four months of the publication of the present communication in the Official Journal of the European Communities. Proposals received after this date need not be taken into consideration by the Commission.

During the preparation of proposals, the Commission will offer on request any necessary technical assistance.

Local and other authorities and the social partners should be involved in the preparation and implementation of operational programmes in the manner appropriate to each Member State.

The proposals must include an appreciation of the situation indicating the objective to be attained and should include a timetable, criteria and procedures for implementation, monitoring and assessment. During and at the end of the planning period the Commission shall evaluate, in partnership with the Member States, the results of the programmes submitted. The European Parliament, the Management Committee on the Community initiatives and the monitoring committees shall be informed of the results of such evaluations and the action taken in response to them.

21. As far as the most remote regions are concerned, the measures laid down in this initiative should be, as a priority, implemented in the framework and within the financial resources of the Community initiative Regis.

22. All correspondence related to this notice should be addressed to:

Mr E. Landaburu,
Director-General,
Directorate-General for Regional Policy,
Commission of the European Communities,
Rue de la Loi, 200,
B-1049 Brussels.

I

(Information)

COMMISSION

NOTICE TO THE MEMBER STATES

laying down guidelines for global grants or integrated operational programmes for which Member States are invited to submit applications for assistance within the framework of a Community initiative concerning the restructuring of the fisheries sector

(PESCA)

(94/C 180/01)

1. At its meeting on 15 June 1994, the Commission of the European Communities decided to establish a Community initiative concerning the restructuring of the fisheries sector thereafter referred to as 'Pesca') within the meaning of Article 11 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 4253/88, as last amended by Regulation (EEC) No 2082/93⁽¹⁾.
2. In the context of Pesca, Community assistance in the form of global grants or integrated operational programmes may be made available to those engaged in the fisheries sector to implement measures in accordance with the guidelines laid down in this notice.

I. OBJECTIVES

3. The fishing industry⁽²⁾ is engaged in far-reaching changes which compel it to seek new directions, new forms of development and new measures involving the various parties concerned.
4. The changes in the sector are necessary as a result of a structural crisis of unprecedented seriousness:
 - the chronic and virtually universal overcapacity of the fishing fleets imposes the conversion of a large number of fishing vessels (in some segments of the fleet, a recent Council decision requires the permanent withdrawal of 20% of capacity by the end of 1996);
 - the over-capitalization and excessive debt levels of firms further aggravates the crisis on the market;
 - the restrictions placed on certain fishing techniques have serious consequences for certain specialized fleets and have to be offset;
 - the implementation of the European Economic Area and the possible enlargement of the Union will create difficulties for certain sections of the industry;
 - the setting of Community standards for hygiene, health, product quality and safety on board fishing vessels will entail the disappearance of many small firms (offshore fishing, aquaculture and processing establishments) and the closure of auction halls.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No L 192, 31. 7. 1993, p. 20.

⁽²⁾ The 'fishing industry' comprises those engaged in economic and social activities in the 'sector', as referred to in Council Regulation (EEC) No 3699/93 of 21 December 1993 (OJ No L 346, 31. 12. 1993, p. 1).

5. Furthermore, many coastal areas, particularly those dependent on fisheries, suffer from socio-economic weaknesses. In such areas, if related activities are included, fishing is often the main economic activity, or indeed the only one, and any slackening in this sector poses a serious threat to the very survival of the area.

6. Because of its extremely fragmented nature, with the exception of Objective 5(a) — Fisheries, the fisheries sector and areas dependent on it have the greatest difficulty in benefiting from Community structural assistance. Only a specific, targeted measure, implemented at the level of those involved in economic activity, can meet its needs.

The aim of Pesca is to enable the fisheries sector to carry out changes successfully and help it to cope with the attendant social and economic consequences and to contribute to the diversification of the areas concerned by developing job-creating activities.

Pesca is complementary to the structural assistance which will be available under the CSFs:

- traditional assistance for the restructuring and modernization of firms in the sector (Objective 5(a) — Fisheries);
- assistance for the socio-economic conversion of coastal areas (Objectives 1, 2 and 5(b));
- assistance for adjustment to industrial change (Objective 4).

II. MECHANISM

7. The various forms of assistance available under the Structural Funds Regulations may be used for Pesca.

By way of example, the measures may include one or more of the following:

- global grants to bodies established in the area;
- direct involvement of the economic and social partners;
- networking of management bodies for exchanges of information and experience;
- financing of specific projects.

III. BENEFICIARIES

8. Pesca is designed principally for areas dependent on fisheries in regions eligible under Objectives 1, 2 and 5(b). However, in view of the specific problems and wide dispersion of fisheries activities, a maximum of 15 % of the appropriations allocated under Pesca in the Objective 2 and 5(b) areas may be used outside those areas and the Objective 1 regions.

Measures under this initiative to be implemented in the most remote regions are eligible in priority under the Regis initiative.

‘Area dependent on fisheries’ means an employment area (or a group of municipalities) where the contribution of the fisheries sector to economic activity (as measured in terms of jobs or value added) is such that the difficulties of the fisheries sector have resulted or will result in the slackening of activity and job losses which seriously undermine the socio-economic fabric.

9. Within these geographical limits, Pesca can provide assistance to a number of categories of final beneficiaries:

- collective bodies, whether public or private (e.g. municipalities or groups of municipalities, chambers of commerce);

- individuals engaged in economic activity who are able to make a direct contribution to the diversification of activity (craft firms, small businesses);
- other collective bodies, whether public or private, directly affected by change in the sector (e.g. fishing cooperatives, groups of fishing firms or fishermen, non-profit-making associations);
- fishermen and others working in the fisheries sector.

IV. ELIGIBLE MEASURES

10. The eligible measures may fall into one of the following categories:

- diversification of activities in the eligible areas:
 - study of local potential for economic development;
 - development of fishing ports to accommodate new activities, including tourism;
 - assistance for the establishment of new craft firms and small businesses;
- business services:
 - establishment or development of companies or bodies providing advice on the management and organization of firms; assistance for managing the restructuring of firms in the sector; assistance for the grouping of firms (including transnational grouping);
 - assistance for the transfer of technology (including transnational transfers);
 - training in marketing, management and new technologies;
- maintenance or creation of jobs:
 - retraining or extending the vocational qualifications of fishermen; improving the content of initial training, including in particular an economic content; training in the biological and economic management of fisheries and training in the common fisheries policy;
 - training of instructors;
 - improving employment services;
 - assistance for geographical mobility;
 - assistance for entry onto the labour market (aid for recruitment to newly created stable jobs);
- financial engineering:
 - facilitating access to the capital market by small and craft firms, principally by providing guarantees and taking holdings;
 - finance for interest subsidy schemes;
- specific projects of a general and/or transnational nature in the fisheries sectors:
 - vessels to provide medical assistance to distant fleets;
 - seasonal adjustment to bring supply into line with demand through rationalization of the schedule of product inputs;
 - pilot projects for the management of fisheries; real-time monitoring of the proportion of juveniles in catches with the specific aim of developing a system for the temporary suspension of activity;
 - finding a solution to the conflicts between various types of gear;
 - common management of shared fisheries;
 - mapping sea-bed obstacles to fisheries (wrecks, drill-heads, etc.);

- rationalization of marketing chains for fisheries products;
- promotion and upgrading of fisheries products; quality certification; development of quality designations; development of techniques to verify compliance with quality standards;
- studies and research into new markets and new outlets and easier access for fisheries products to outside markets;
- meetings and periodic conferences of heads of training establishments for fishermen in the Member States;
- networking of those engaged in Pesca;
- productive investment in the sector:
 - aid for the improvement of productivity and rationalization of work;
 - diversification and conversion of firms in the sector, particularly towards maritime tourism;
 - adaptation of the products of firms in the sector to meet market opportunities.

V. MONITORING — CONTROL — ASSESSMENT

11. For the purposes of monitoring, the Monitoring Committee for the appropriate regional objective (Objective 1, 2 or 5(b)) will be responsible for monitoring each integrated operational programme or global grant.

12. Controls will be governed by Article 23 of Regulation (EEC) No 4253/88, with the Member State being responsible for all operations. In view of the decentralized nature of the management system for Pesca, proposals must include a detailed description of management and control by the Member State.

13. The proposals must include an appreciation of the situation indicating the objectives to be attained and should include a timetable, criteria and procedures for implementation, monitoring and assessment. During and at the end of the planning period the Commission shall evaluate, in partnership with the Member States, the results of the programmes submitted. The European Parliament, the Management Committee on the Community initiatives and the monitoring committees shall be informed of the results of such evaluations and the action taken in response to them.

VI. COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION TO THE FINANCING OF PESCA

14. Pesca will be financed jointly by the Member State, the Community and the beneficiaries referred to in Section III.

The total contribution for 1994-1999 of the Structural Funds to Pesca is ECU 250 million at 1994 prices. Of this amount, ECU 125 million is for the Objective 1 regions.

Measures under this initiative to be implemented in the most remote regions will in priority be financed under the Regis initiative.

15. The rates of contribution defined in the Structural Funds Regulations apply to Pesca.

VII. APPLICATIONS FOR ASSISTANCE FROM THE MEMBER STATES

16. The Member States shall submit applications for assistance concerning integrated operational programmes or global grants within four months from the date of publication of this notice. The Commission will take applications received after that date into consideration only in exceptional and duly justified cases.

If an application concerns areas under several Objectives (1, 2, 5(b)), expenditure for each Objective must be shown separately.

17. In assessing the quality of proposals, the Commission will take particular account of the following elements:

- specific development objectives, on economically viable bases;
- expected impact;
- implementation mechanisms;
- monitoring, control and assessment methods;
- schedule for implementation, including deadlines for assessment of impact;
- additional nature of the assistance applied for;
- participation by those involved in economic and social activities in the sector;
- participation by regional and national authorities;
- appropriate utilization of loans and grants.

18. Address to which all correspondence concerning this notice is to be sent:

Mr J. Almeida Serra,
Director-General,
Directorate-General for Fisheries,
Commission of the European Communities,
Rue de la Loi, 200,
B-1049 Brussels.

European Commission

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